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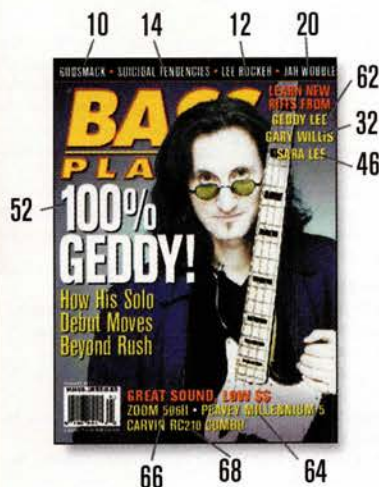
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ANDREW McNAUGHTON



Low Down

RESOLUTIONS

Maybe this year won't find us sending humans to Jupiter to find the source of mysterious radio signals, as Arthur C. Clarke imagined in the book that became Stanley Kubrick's epochal 2001: *A Space Odyssey*. But even if you're not a chronological stickler and don't care that January 1 marks the mathematical beginning of the new century and new millennium, there's no denying the digits 2-0-0-1 make for a formidable-looking date. Perhaps that portentous numerology has you casting about for appropriately weighty New Year's resolutions. Here are a few suggestions, inspired by our daily onslaught of suggestions, complaints, entreaties, and musings.

Turn off your amp. Learn to make your bass speak with a clear, assertive voice using just fingers. That's the surest answer to the question, "How do I find my own sound?" And while you're saving electricity ...

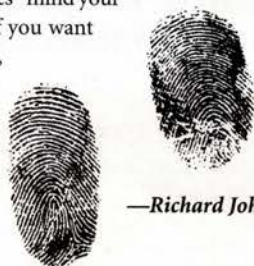
Turn off your computer. A reader recently e-mailed me a sound file of a song and asked if I agreed with another listener's evaluation that the bass was too busy. After I offered my opinion, I got this reply: "Had a computer analysis run on the song. You stated the whole thing sounded 'like it was fighting itself.' The computer says you are crazy!" He went on to cite the "input data response," which apparently liked the rhythm tracks just fine. While it was somewhat interesting to have a computer comment on my mental state, it was downright disturbing to think that someday software will decide what we listen to. (Open the pod bay door, HAL!) So while you aspiring tunesmiths are mastering your Macs and PCs, don't forget to use your E-A-Rs. And after you've tracked some great-sounding songs ...

Examine your goals. "Last New Years Eve," writes a reader, appropriately enough, "I decided to take the plunge and upload my song 'Sludge' to mp3.com. Within three months it had climbed to No. 1 in the instrumental metal genre, and I was making money and getting tons of e-mail every day. That was when all my doubts about being recognized as a bassist went away. Now I know it's not a matter of *if* I will get noticed—it's simply a matter of *when*." So—you're making money with your music, getting lots of mail ... by whom else did you want to get noticed? Gwyneth Paltrow? Remember, in the New eWorld Order, the old concept of "rock star" is quickly growing obsolete. I say good riddance to that heart-breaking, corporate-driven game. (Aside to record-company types: Stop trying to hose us. We sincerely doubt your artist is The Next Jaco or One Of The Top Ten Bassists In The World—phrases I've read in actual press releases.) Speaking of exposure ...

Get your music out into the world. In your own bedroom you may be the best scale-player ever, but music is about communication. Give your skills a reality check, whether by uploading your tunes, auditioning for a band, or organizing a jam session. And since you're not taking the easy way out ...

Listen to something you hate. Really listen. Get past the fact the singer has tattoos or a wears a cowboy hat (or has a tattoo on his cowboy hat), or you think it's music for geezers, or for 13-year-old punks. Search out something out of your comfort zone. Analyze the bass line. Figure out how the rhythm section works. Try to play the bass part and cop the groove—write it out if you're so inclined. (Ancillary resolution: Learn to read and write standard notation—or tab, if that's your weakness.) In general, approach an unfamiliar style with a musician's mindset, not a music critic's. I'm not guaranteeing you'll end up liking it any better, but at least you'll know why. And you'll be able to impress folks with things like, "A folk-rap-thrash bass line? Sure—that would sound like ..."

Have some bass resolutions you'd like to share (besides "mind your own business")? Send them along. In the meantime, if you want someone on the BASS PLAYER staff to critique your song, please send a tape, CD, or sound file, along with \$89.95 and a written-out transcription of all instrumental and vocal parts. Happy New Year.



—Richard Johnston

BASS PLAYER

www.bassplayer.com

A Music Player Publication

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Back issue orders and inquiries

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Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, CA and additional mailing offices. Subscription rate for the U.S. is \$29.95 for one year. All orders from outside the U.S. must be accompanied by payment in U.S. funds with additional postage of \$15.00 per year for Canada/Mexico/International surface mail* or \$30.00 per year for international air courier. *Canadian GST Permit #124513540. Please allow 6-8 weeks for address change to take effect. Canada post international publication mail product (Canadian distribution) sales agreement no. 0608083. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BASS PLAYER, P.O. Box 57324, Boulder, CO 80322-7324. BASS PLAYER (ISSN 1050-785X) Volume 12, Number 1 is published monthly by United Entertainment Media, Inc., 800 Harrison Street, San Francisco, CA 94107. Telephone (415) 905-2200; FAX (415) 905-2233. All material published in BASS PLAYER is copyrighted 2001 by United Entertainment Media, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction of material appearing in BASS PLAYER is forbidden without written permission. Publisher assumes no responsibility for return of unsolicited manuscripts, photos, or artwork. BASS PLAYER is a registered trademark of United Entertainment Media, Inc.

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Meanwhile, these subsonic mad men have threatened to appear at music festivals and arenas all over the globe. They will show **no mercy**. If you happen to see them, do not approach unless you are armed with ear plugs. Let's just be careful out there people.



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Letters

Richard Johnston, BASS PLAYER, 2800 Campus Dr., San Mateo, CA 94403



Sell 'Phones

Your November '00 issue on making and selling your own music was timely for our band, which is currently producing tracks for an indie project. I found Craig Anderton's Master Class especially informative, and I have a tip readers may find useful. One of my most valuable recording tools are "studio monitor" headphones (mine are AKG K240DF). Referenced for flat response, they're invaluable for getting your sound in the studio without having to worry about monitor response. If I'm involved in mix-down, the headphones help when I try to set the bass in the mix. (We always run rough mixes across a variety of home audio media—car stereos, home stereos, boomboxes, etc.) I also agree with Craig about midrange. I first find my sound, and then I add a little midrange to help the bass cut through the mix. Many times bassists lay tracks with just one or two rhythm instruments plus drums, but what might sound great in that environment doesn't cut when everything else is layered.

John Curran
Apple Valley, CA

Right after I got off the phone booking studio time for my first

solo project, what did I get in the mail? The cover story on how to make and sell my music. You cats are a scary gaggle o' telepathics.

Joshua D. Pickenpaugh
by e-mail

We knew you were going to say that.

Rivers Dance

Thank you for putting Sam Rivers on the October '00 cover—I love Sam, and anything that features him is awesome. You definitely won me over—I am going

to subscribe.

Adrianna Uribe
San Antonio, TX

So Sam Rivers is an awesome bassist, and I suck, right? Could it be he's on the cover just because of his band's "firm grip on the pop charts"? I am busting my brains in a jazz band, trying to improve my ear, my music-theory knowledge, and my improvisational abilities, while Sam and others on the metal-rap bandwagon mainly bust their hands bashing away (and risk breaking other bones with all that jumping around). And, of course, I am not getting paid at all, but I enjoy the musical challenge my gig affords me. In the interview Rivers admits the band took into account "what kinds of songs the audiences reacted to best," and they "geared the CD to the live show with the right tempo balance." Sounds like the philosophy Britney Spears and boy groups use to achieve their only goal—selling records.

Hector Rodriguez
by e-mail

Solder Fodder

I was thrilled to read your evaluation of the J-Retro preamp [October '00]. The idea of a drop-

in active system was so exciting I acquired two—one for myself and one for a friend. I did not read any mention of cavity shielding in the article, but Steve Barr at Vintage Bass Trading Co. (the distributor) highly recommended shielding, so I took my '77 and my friend's '73 Jazz Basses to my tech. After he shielded both, I watched him complete the tricky soldering and then struggle to complete the "drop-in" part of the installation. You correctly pointed out that the soldering requires expertise. You also mentioned some basses might require extra work. The tech felt that many if not most J-Basses would require extra work to fit the upgrade. The unit works and sounds fine, but anyone considering this upgrade should be ready to deal with the potential extra installation cost.

Ed Zingaro
San Francisco, CA

Steve Barr replies: "As our product information clearly states, a crucial factor for the installation of a J-Retro 01 Preamp is the size of the routed slot. These do vary slightly from bass to bass. Although the preamp is likely to fit without a problem, it's an absolute must to check that the slot is wide enough to take a PP3 (9-volt) battery. The depth is important, too; [it] ideally needs to be a minimum of 32.5mm to allow a little clearance. Also, some '70s Jazz Basses have a small "shelf" inside the control cavity, which has to be routed out to accept the J-Retro. I have encountered situations where additional routing was necessary in less than ten percent of all installations to date."

Don't Pull Tab

I disagree with John Turner's view of tablature [Letters, November '00]. I've been reading bass clef music since 1975, and while I feel notation gives all the necessary

basic information, tab helps define the flavor of the music and provides a visual clue to the path the player took in a piece of music. Please, keep the tab and the notation. Both are needed.

Brantley Allen
by e-mail

The Really, Really Last Word

Thanks to the many BASS PLAYER readers (now over 1,000) who have sent me letters of support about my anti-pick quote [May '00], and to the outraged pickers (exactly five) who also took the time to argue their case. What impressed me the most is the passion we bass players have for our beloved instrument. Plectrum or pizzicato, this is a common factor that unites us. Now that we've had our say let's all go back to doing what we do best: holding down the groove and occasionally annoying the guitar players.

Dann Glenn
by e-mail

Correction

November '00, page 73: As you work out those 16th-note quintuplets in Ex. 6 of the Jaco lesson, please note the chord on the first full bar should be E6/9.

e-mail

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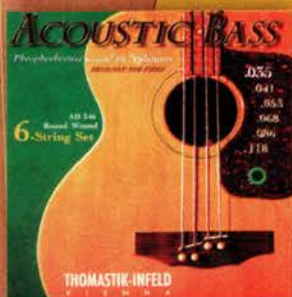
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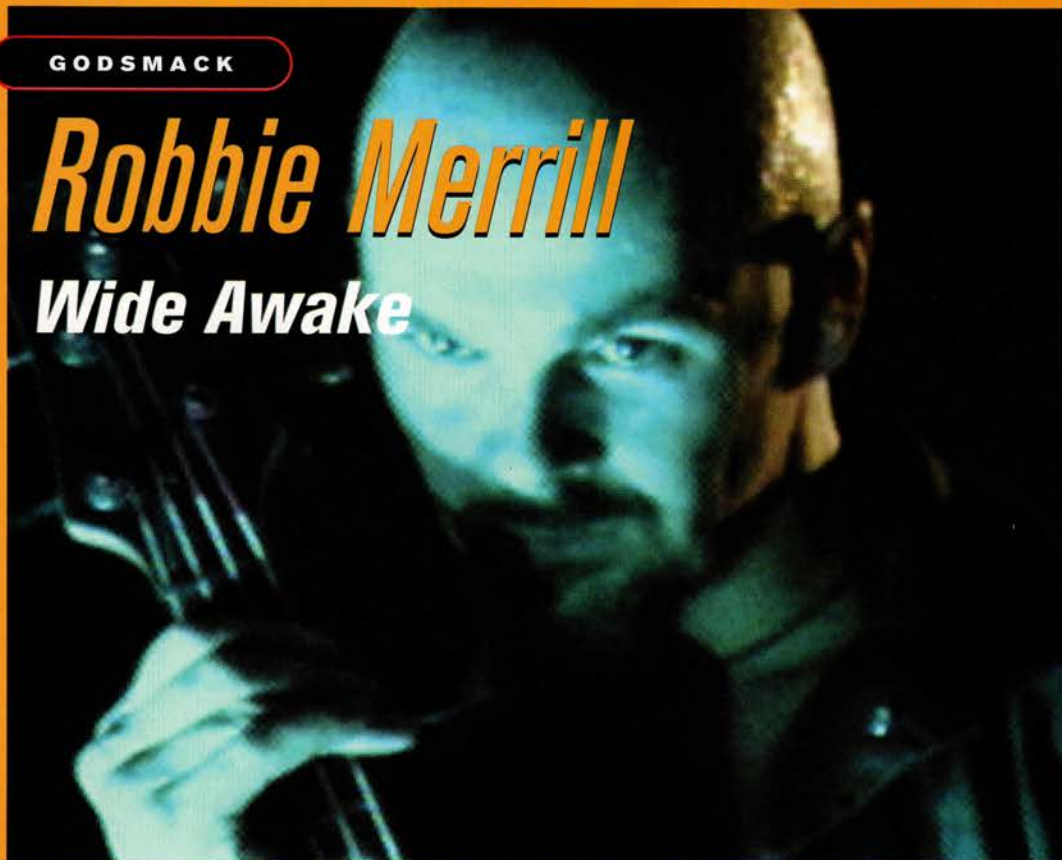
BassNotes

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GODSMACK

Robbie Merrill

Wide Awake



Godsmack's Robbie Merrill is one of rock's most aggressive players. Yet, he admits, "I wasn't sure if I was going to be able to play this type of music. The songs are really demanding and you can't stray off the parts. But playing live is a lot of fun. Every night you can get your aggression out."

Night after night, the 37-year-

old pounds his left-handed Ibanez Soundgear 4-strings—strung with medium-light GHS Boomers and tuned drop-D or CGCF—as Godsmack supports its latest Republic/Universal offering, *Awake*. But not long ago, the Methuen, Massachusetts native played in several completely different bands—including country, blues, reggae, prog, and a '50s/'60s cover band.

HOW'D HE DO THAT?

♩ = 93



On "Sick of Life," Merrill grinds out this insistent riff and its ominous accents on his C-tuned E string.

Onstage Tip

Robbie prefers to keep his setup simple: "Every room is different and sometimes you don't get a soundcheck, so the more basic your setup is, the better off you are."

"I'd cut out of a rock rehearsal and show up to a country gig with my long hair and sneaks on, and just plug in and go," he laughs. In the '50s/'60s gig Robbie "learned what bass was all about. I learned what root notes were, and I began to develop my ear." With other cover bands he stepped in the shoes of some of his heroes, including Geddy Lee (see page 52), Sting, and Aerosmith's Tom Hamilton. Jaco Pastorius and Victor Wooten have inspired him to start writing solo material, which he describes as "happier" music with a more major feel than his main gig.

On tour with Godsmack, Merrill plugs into three SWR Bass 750 heads—one powers a pair of SWR 4x10 cabinets, and each of the other two drives a pair of 8x10s. For distortion he uses an SWR

Interstellar Overdrive preamp and a Tech 21 SansAmp. For the *Awake* sessions, Robbie used the SansAmp and two SWR 750 heads powering SWR 1x15 and 4x10 cabinets.

Drummer-turned-singer Sully Erna is Godsmack's main songwriting force, which accounts for the percussive nature of the band's bass and guitar riffs. "It's pretty straightforward," says Merrill. "When it comes time for me to put down the bass part I listen to the song and try to figure out what it needs. A lot of times I throw in simple things here and there, but if I overplay, the song starts missing something."

—David John Farinella

Israel's Eyal Vodnizky

WORLD BASS

In 1996, opportunity found itself at Israeli luthier Eyal Vodnizky's doorstep in the form of Eberhard Weber. The distinguished German bassist's 5-string electric upright, built by Munich's Paul Lijesen, had been damaged in transit—and with a solo concert just hours away, the instrument needed emergency treatment. Vodnizky patched it up to playable condition, and he also offered to build Weber a new, improved bass. "I wanted to make an instrument that would satisfy his main design demands," Vodnizky says. "Though there was one major difference: The bass should have an acoustic body to replace the old solid body."

Eberhard gave Vodnizky nearly complete freedom in materials and design. "He had just a few basic demands. The bass should be lighter than the old one, and as short as possible but with the same 1,000mm scale length; it should have a standard D neck and scroll; and—of course—better sound. The design part took almost as long as actually building it. I am a violin maker in my soul and experience, so I went for traditional materials and building methods."

Weber's hollowbody Vodnizky bass has a maple

neck, a top carved from Swiss pine, and a back and rims made from maple seasoned for over 20 years. Vodnizky placed a small oval soundhole near the end of the ebony fingerboard, and he finished the instrument with traditional violin varnish. Other features include a set of Wilson piezo transducers in the bridge, a custom-made magnetic pickup at the fingerboard end, and two removable endpins. "Since Mr. Weber usually plays seated, the endpin on the back supports the instrument's weight. The bass has a loud and clear sound, and thanks to the piezo pickup, the body resonance adds richness to the tone compared to his old solidbody."

Based on the experience he gained from making the Weber bass, Vodnizky has since built several more electric uprights; made to order, they cost about \$8,500. Vodnizky also builds acoustic double basses.

—Mikael Jansson

Contact Information

Eyal Vodnizky, 14 Rashi St., Tel Aviv 63294, Israel
(011-972) 3 528-0513 phone, (011-972) 3 525-9462 fax



Q&A

What is a groundwound string? What are its advantages and disadvantages?

Sara Hirosaki, Bozeman, MT

A groundwound (also known as halfwound or half-round) string is a roundwound string with the outer portion flattened to a smooth surface. Groundwounds are easier on the frets and fingers than rounds. They're also a good choice for fretless players who want to reduce fingerboard wear, while retaining some of the brightness of roundwounds. Groundwounds are also more flexible than flatwounds and produce less



finger noise than rounds. Here are some popular brands:

D'Addario Half Round Series II (\$48)

www.daddario.com

GHS Brite Flats (\$41)

www.ghsstrings.com

Dean Markley Ground Wounds (\$41)

www.deanmarkley.com

Got a question? Send it to:

Q&A/BASS PLAYER

2800 Campus Drive

San Mateo, CA 94403

Lakland/Ampeg Giveaway Winner

Susan Beasley of San Antonio, Texas, won the \$9,800 Lakland/Ampeg Giveaway

from May and June '00. Sue's winnings include Lakland Joe Osborn and

Bob Glaub signature basses, an Ampeg SVT-IV Pro head, an SVT810E 8x10

cabinet, and 12 sets of Lakland strings.

Wanted!



'51 P-Bass

For the 50th anniversary of the Fender Precision Bass, BASS PLAYER is seeking photos and stories of first-generation P-Basses, produced from 1951 to 1954. Ideally we're looking for cool photos of gigging basses in action and/or with original-owner and musical-adventure anecdotes. Museum pieces are welcome, too.

Description

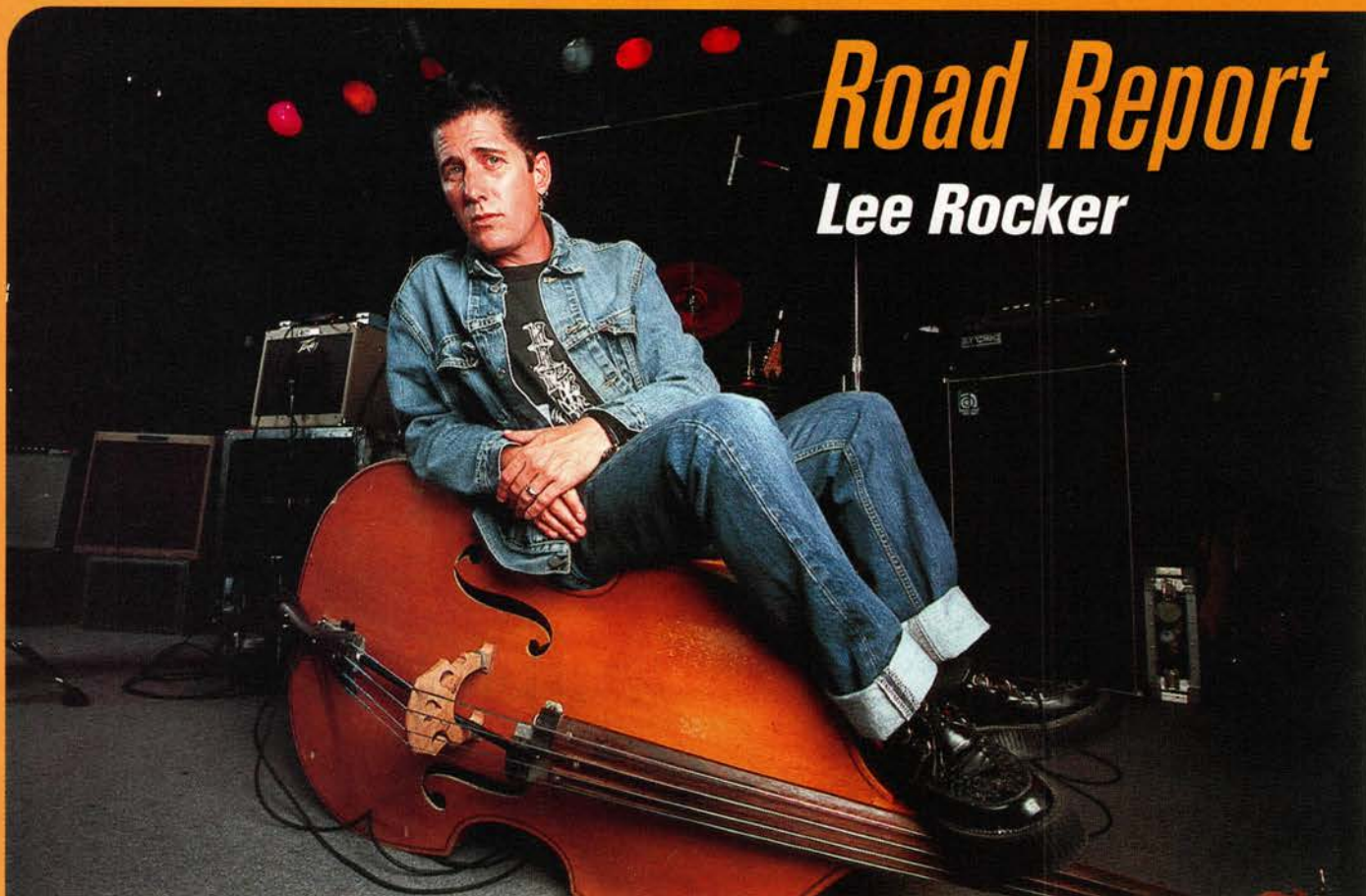
A blond-finished ash slab body with through-body stringing, maple neck with Telecaster-style headstock, one black four polepiece single-coil pickup, and Bakelite pickguard (with wood finger rest) and bridge saddles.

If seen

Please contact BASS PLAYER, 2800 Campus Dr., San Mateo, CA 94403; (650) 513-4300; www.bassplayer.com.

Road Report

Lee Rocker



The player: Rock & roll resuscitator Lee Rocker, who mixes punk DIY philosophy and energy with early rock and country sounds. The former Stray Cat doghouse pounder led Lee Rocker's Big Blue before releasing two solo records of rootsy rock and country standards mixed with his vintage-sounding originals.

The style: An aggressive, high-volume take on traditional rockabilly. (Touring partner and original Elvis guitarist Scotty Moore says Lee pushes the beat a bit more than Elvis sideman Bill Black did.) For his slap playing, Lee gets his fingers around and underneath the strings, pulling them out and then slapping them against the fingerboard with his middle knuckle. His

band puts its own stamp on classics by Carl Perkins, Elvis Presley, Hank Williams, and Bill Monroe. Rocker also has a Homespun instructional video, *Rockabilly Slap Bass* [www.homespuntales.com].

The record: *Lee Rocker Live* [J-Bird, www.j-birdrecords.com] features Lee's forceful, electric-sounding upright slapping and vocals way up-front in a tight live setting with his quartet. His previous studio recording was *No Cats* [Solid Discs].

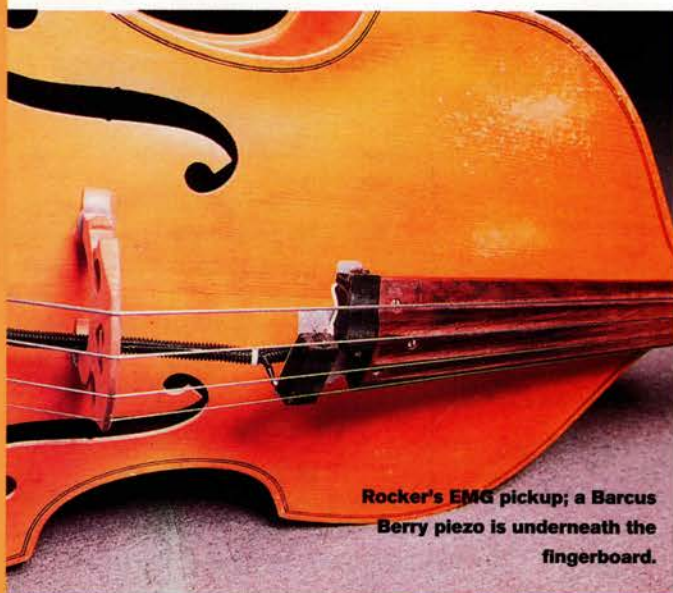
The tour: A short California stint with Moore, who joins the band for the second half of each show. Rocker's band, which plays about 150 shows a year, plans a more extensive East Coast tour early this year.

The gear: Road-worn 1950s blond Kay; early '90s Ampeg SVT for Lee's flexible pickup system. To catch the fundamentals, Rocker bolted an EMG active pickup to the end of the deeply gouged rosewood fingerboard and attached

outboard volume and tone controls under the tailpiece, running the signal into the SVT's channel one. For channel two, Lee runs a Barcus Berry piezo pickup about halfway up the fingerboard's underside to catch the slap—rolling off all of the bass and mids and boosting the treble. Lee says, "The key for this setup is the steel strings and the magnetic pickups. With gut strings and a piezo pickup you don't get the lows you need, and you end up with feedback. With this setup you can go from playing a little room to a 100,000 people." He prefers medium- or heavy-gauge steel-core Jaguar strings, but sometimes he turns to Thomastiks.

The future: Rocker has been in and out of the studio for the past year and a half, recording one song at a time from start to finish. In between fall tour dates, Lee took the band into the studio for a rigorous session to bang out a new record that should hit stores this spring.

—Greg Olwell



Rocker's EMG pickup; a Barcus Berry piezo is underneath the fingerboard.

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Photo: Mary Tenme

Josh Paul Getting Carried Away

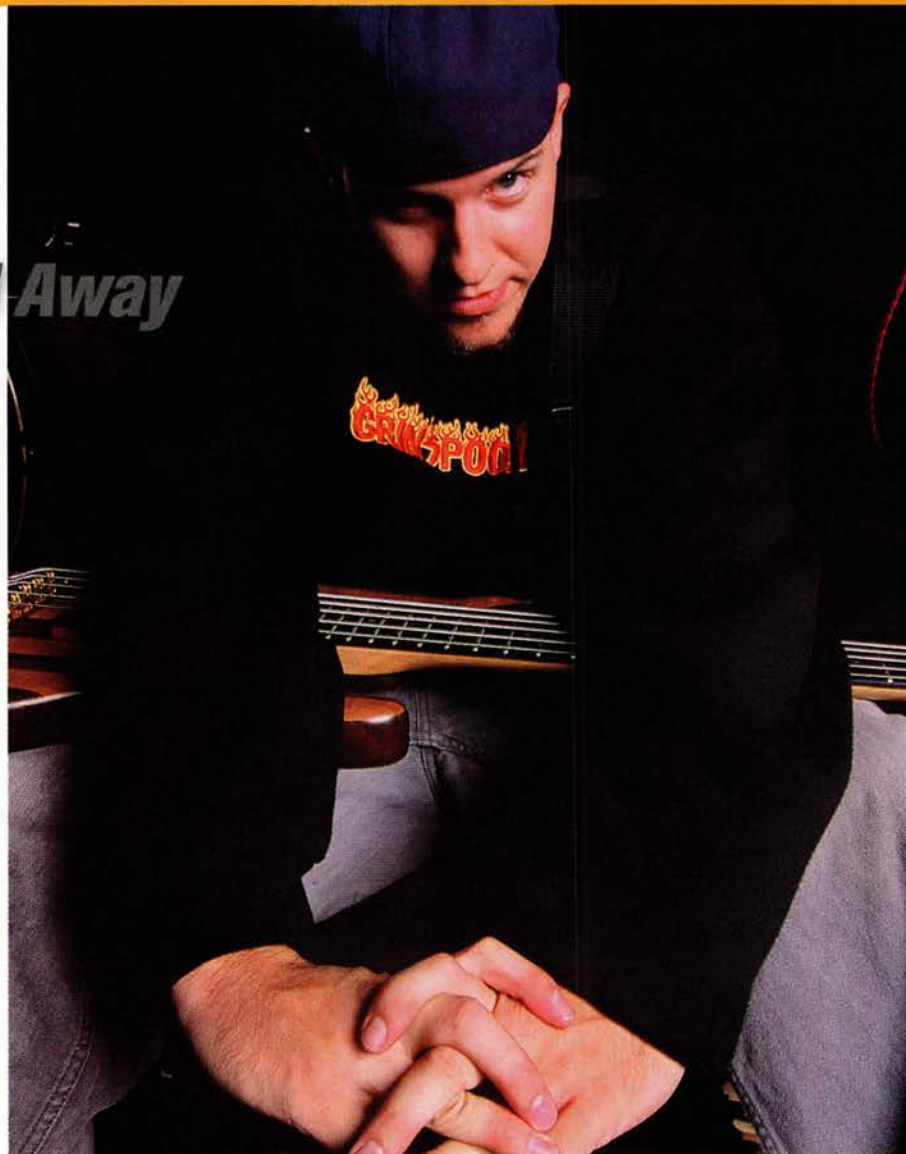
I totally respect people who play it safe," says 23-year-old Josh Paul. "But sometimes I get carried away." Josh describes his playing on his fifth recording with Suicidal Tendencies, *Free Your Soul ... and Save Your Mind* [Suicidal Records], as "a roller-coaster ride of bass flavors. The band encourages me to try different things on each song. I hadn't even heard some of the songs before we went into the studio, so in a way it was like doing session work."

Josh's varied imprint runs deep throughout his work with Suicidal Tendencies as well as with his other band, Infectious Grooves—where he worked with his predecessor, Robert Trujillo, on *Mas Borracho* [Suicidal]. Josh's lines move from solid support to melodic runs up the neck, chordal strums, and slaps. Still, he tries not to dominate the songs with flashy fingerwork. "I totally agree with the saying 'less is more.' I try to play tastefully, but I also try to add spice—it depends on the song and the band."

Josh's career got an early start when he began playing drums at age three in his parents' gospel group. His talents led to a part in Don Henley's "Boys of Summer" video when he was seven. Impressed with the young drummer's skills, Henley struck up a continuing friendship with Josh. "Don has been a huge influence on my career—he has inspired me to learn instruments, and he's given me advice."

Josh began playing bass at his grandfather's urging. "He taught me a lot about reading and theory, and I went to a performing arts high school, where I did a lot of reading in the Latin jazz group. I can read, but I get rusty if I don't do it regularly. I want to work on it more."

On *Free Your Soul*, Josh used a Bossa OBJ-5 for most of the tracks, a fretless Bossa 6-string



on "Home," a Yamaha Nathan East BBEast, and a '78 Music Man StingRay. "I'm still looking for a great-sounding bass that feels good, and I'm working on my sound—I like a lot of depth in the bass and lower midrange." He strings all of his basses with medium-gauge Dean Markley Blue Steels. Josh plays through two Ampeg SVT-3PRO heads, running one into an Ampeg PR410HLS and the other into a PR410H. On the SVTs he sets the bass to 7

and highs to 6, flattens the mids, boosts the gain halfway, and adjusts the master volume to suit room size. To add booty, he steps on a Mu-Tron or an EBS OctaBass.

Josh's love of classic funk runs deep. "Bootsy is my favorite player. I also love Rocco, Jaco, Marcus Miller, James Jamerson, and Flea—he had a big influence on me early on. Prince is a great bass player; he's influenced me as a bassist and as a musician. You have to be a total musician when you're aspiring to be an artist." He credits that thirst for variety with keeping his playing fresh and exciting. "I've done a lot of session work—from rock to pop to R&B to rap. It's awesome getting to play in different settings and in different moods. It really helps me bring something new to Suicidal Tendencies." Whenever he meets fans, Josh tries to pass on his perspective. "I encourage them to listen and explore all kinds of music and appreciate it for what it is—even if they don't like it. Listening to only one type of music is really limiting."

—Greg Olwell

HOW'D HE DO THAT?

♩ = 104

On the one: Taking a cue from Bootsy, Paul anchors the "No More No Less" chorus on beat one of his E-minor line, starting at 0:32.

Lynn Keller

Perpetual Motion

You have to be flexible," says Lynn Keller—that creed has served her well for the last 25 years. The Illinois native juggles three full-time positions: touring bassist for Diana Ross, bassist/music director for Rita Coolidge, and bassist/music director for Walela, a vocal trio comprising sisters Rita and Priscilla Coolidge and Priscilla's daughter, Laura Satterfield. Keller has also toured with, backed, or served as music director for everyone from Nell Carter to Plácido Domingo to the Fifth Dimension—60-odd artists representing most popular-music genres. Amazingly, she also finds time to play sessions, contract music for special events, hire out for live shows, record jingles in her studio, play regularly with several L.A.-area bands, and perform with her own R&B group, the Suits. Her recent recorded work can be heard on Walela's *Unbearable Love* [Triloka].

A flute major at the University of Illinois, Keller picked up electric bass in 1976 and soon relocated to Austin, Texas. "I started playing bass professionally almost immediately," she says. Lynn toured with Circus Vargas for a while but returned to college about six years later, at the

University of Texas. "Electric bass wasn't a recognized instrument major at that time, so I went back to the flute and did bass gigs with my instructors." She got her Jazz Theory/Composition degree and stayed in Texas until 1986, when she moved to California.

Lynn credits her busy L.A. career to two traits: "Ability and attitude. When people hire me they get a great reader, a great groove player, and someone who's not afraid to express opinions. I play very aggressively, and I enjoy contributing and being creative. But having a great attitude is *really* important."

Style Tip

Lynn Keller describes backing Diana Ross as "a player's dream. Her material is full of signature Jamerson Motown lines, in addition to other styles such as straightahead jazz, show tunes, disco, and even hip-hop." How does Lynn make all these different lines her own? "It's in the way I play the actual notes. I might make something more staccato when the original parts were legato. I might put in grace notes or change the parts leading into or out of the meat of the line."

With her schedule and size—she's less than five feet tall and weighs under 90 pounds—gear portability is a main concern. "I'm always looking for gear that's more



suited to me. I want a great sound without breaking my back." Keller currently uses a Pedulla Thunder Bass 4-string, a Kydd electric upright, and a Yamaha RBX760A 4 fitted with a Yamaha G-50 MIDI converter—a synth-bass system with a pickup and Yamaha MU100 and FS1R synth modules. Her effects include a Visual Volume Pedal and a Boss OC-2 octaver. For local gigs she powers

two Euphonic Audio 1x10 cabs with a Walter Woods 1600w head; for tours she switches to a Euphonic Audio iAmp and two 2x10 cabs.

Though Keller knows it takes talent to get hired, she points out the importance of other qualities. "For bassists, it's important to master reading, master the styles, be adaptable, and play from the heart. If your heart's not in it, it shows—and then it's time to quit."

—Thomas Victor



Mean Gene Kelton & The Die Hards' "The Avon Man"

Houston-based Mean Gene Kelton & the Die Hards—with Gene's son Jamie Kelton on a '95 Fender Jazz—have earned over \$8,000 in mp3.com Payback for Playback earnings with the high-energy Texas blues shuffle of "The Avon Man" and other tracks. www.mp3.com/genekelton

♩ = 128 A \flat 7 D \flat 7 E \flat 7 \sharp 9 A \flat 7

etc.

WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN!

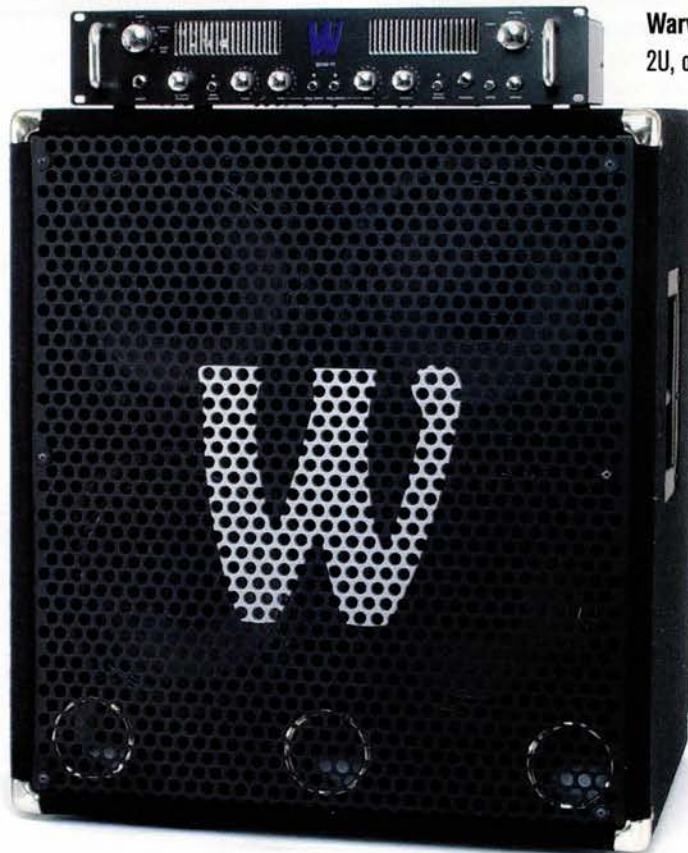
BASS PLAYER WARWICK Giveaway



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GRAND PRIZE Retail value: \$7,026.00

Warwick Infinity LTD 2000 Bass: AAA flame-maple top, ovankol body with a 3/8" bird's-eye cap, 34"-scale neck, hollow body with f-holes. Other features include a MEC humbucking bridge pickup, jazz neck pickup, and 3-band Seymour Duncan preamp. This unique bass has growling mids, a great attack similar to an acoustic bass, and lots of sustain. **Retail value: \$3,999.00**



Warwick Quad VI Amp: 600 watts, 19", 2U, one 12AX and two ECC83 tubes, small tube EL84 power amps, rotary EQ controls (bass, mid 1, mid 2, treble, and output), separate low and high boost. Headphone jack, mute switch, groundlift, DI out, line/instrument level output, effects loop, tuner out. Weight: 36.3 lbs./16.5 kg. Depth: 16.93". **Retail value: \$1,999.00**

Warwick W-411 Pro Cabinet: - 4x10" Eminence Custom Speakers, 1 HF horn with attenuator, 600 watts RMS. Weight: 100 lbs./45.5 kg. Dimensions: 26.5" x 23.8" x 19" (HxWxD). **Retail value: \$1028.00**

WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN!

For this month's giveaway, BASS PLAYER and Warwick have joined together to bring you a top-notch bass and amp package. One lucky Grand Prize winner will take home the innovative Warwick Infinity 4-string bass and muscular Quad VI bass rig, which retail for a total of \$7,026.00! A second prize winner will receive a killer Warwick 250-watt Combo Amp, and a third prize winner will receive a great 150-watt Combo Amp. Remember that you don't have to subscribe to BASS PLAYER to enter the Giveaway, but you're always a winner when you take advantage of the great lessons, music, artist interviews, and product reviews that appear in BASS PLAYER each month!

SECOND PRIZE Retail value: \$1398.00

Warwick CCL 250-watt Combo Amp: Solid-state combo with 15" speaker, HF horn, 250 watts RMS. Rotary EQ controls (bass, treble and parametric mids), low and high boost, switchable limiter. Protections: short-circuit, HF oscillation, fan cooling, DC. Weight: 72 lbs/33 kg. Dimensions: 23.3" x 21" x 19" (HxWxD).



THIRD PRIZE Retail value: \$1198.00

Warwick CCL 150-watt Combo Amp: Solid-state combo with 12" speaker, HF horn, 150 watts RMS. Rotary EQ controls (bass, treble and parametric mids), low and high boost, switchable limiter. Protections: short-circuit, HF oscillation, fan cooling, DC. Weight: 47.3 lbs/21.5 kg. Dimensions: 18.3" x 17.5" x 15.75" (HxWxD).

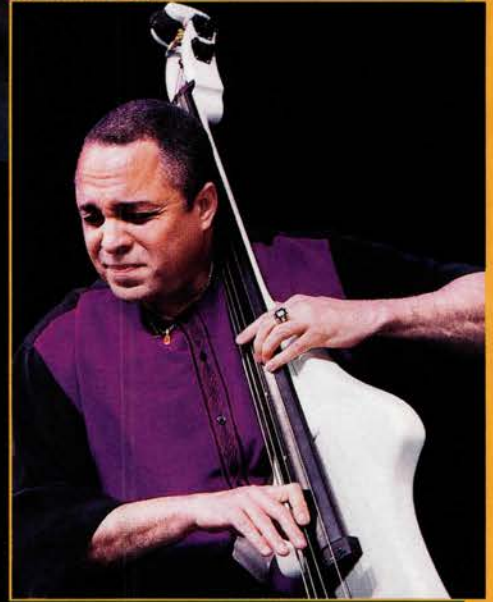
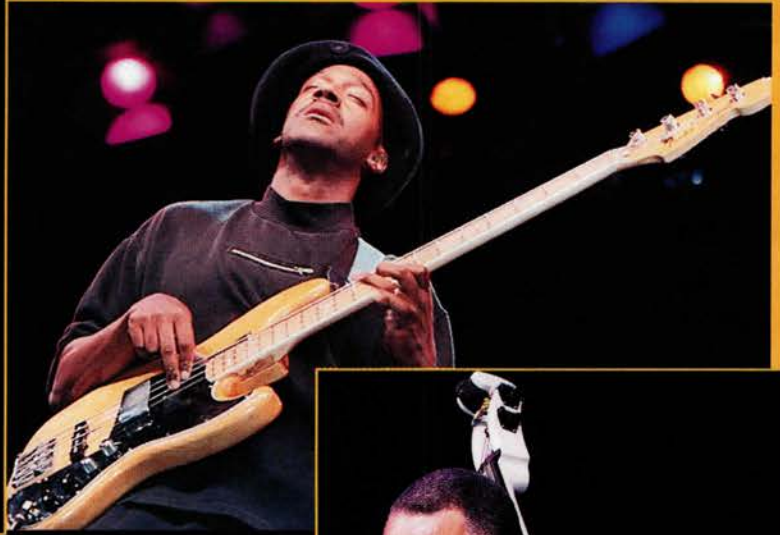
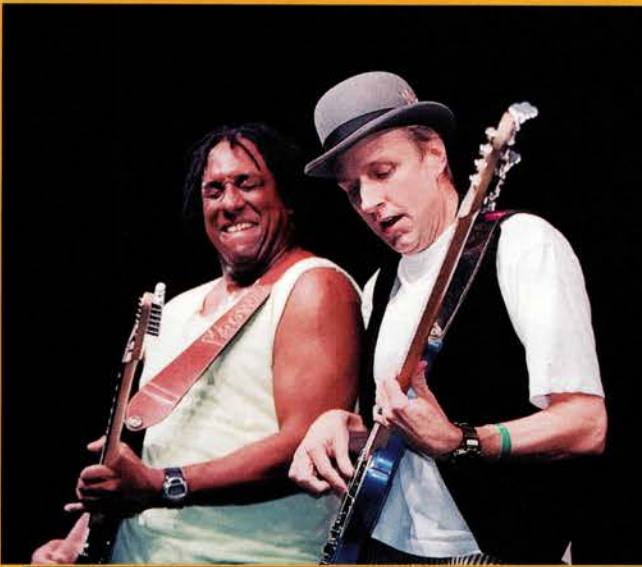
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- 1. To enter:** You may enter by printing your name and address on the official entry card, or postcard and mailing it to *Bass Player/Warwick Giveaway*, P.O. Box 57326, Boulder, CO 80322-7326 or online at [HTTP://www.bassplayer.com](http://www.bassplayer.com) beginning approximately January 2, 2001. Entries must be received by February 28, 2001. Enter as often as you wish (as often as once per day online), but each entry must be separately postmarked. Copies, mechanically reproduced, automated and computer-aided or generated script entries will not be eligible and are void. United Entertainment Media, Inc., ("Sponsor") is not responsible for late, lost, or misdirected mail.
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additional compensation unless prohibited by law. Each verified prize winner may be required to sign an Affidavit of Eligibility and a Publicity/Liability Release unless prohibited by law. Those materials must be returned within ten days of notification. Failure to comply may result in disqualification and the selection of an alternate.

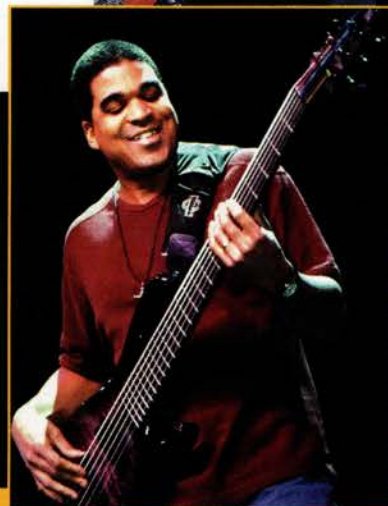
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- 7. Winners' List:** To obtain the name of the prize winners, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to "Winner", *Bass Player/Warwick Giveaway*, Music Player Media, 2800 Campus Drive, San Mateo, CA 94403 USA.



Bass Day 2000

The Subwave Series

AS the Mets and Yankees headed to the World Series in New York last October, the Bass Collective and BASS PLAYER created a rumble downtown at Bass Day 2000. During the show/gear expo, a packed Manhattan Center ballroom shook to (clockwise from top left) Will Lee (with guitarist Hiram Bullock), Marcus Miller, Carlos D'I Puerto (whose son, bassist Carlitos D'I Puerto, joined him in the set), Lifetime Achievement Award honorees Joe Osborn and Percy Heath, Oteil Burbridge, and Billy Sheehan. Thanks to the artists and sponsors who made the day a suitable century-ending event. Next month: Bass Day master classes.





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Jah Wobble

Subharmonic Synthesis

Jah Wobble becomes a sonic philosopher when he discusses the intangibles of creating. "Music's overtones are incredibly beautiful, natural things, and that's what makes a line sometimes—those subharmonics going on at the bottom. With just a one-note *B* line in *E*—this pulse—you can pick up on those natural subharmonics in that low *E* and build on them. You make a natural cathedral of sound. That's the whole thing going on with Deep Space."

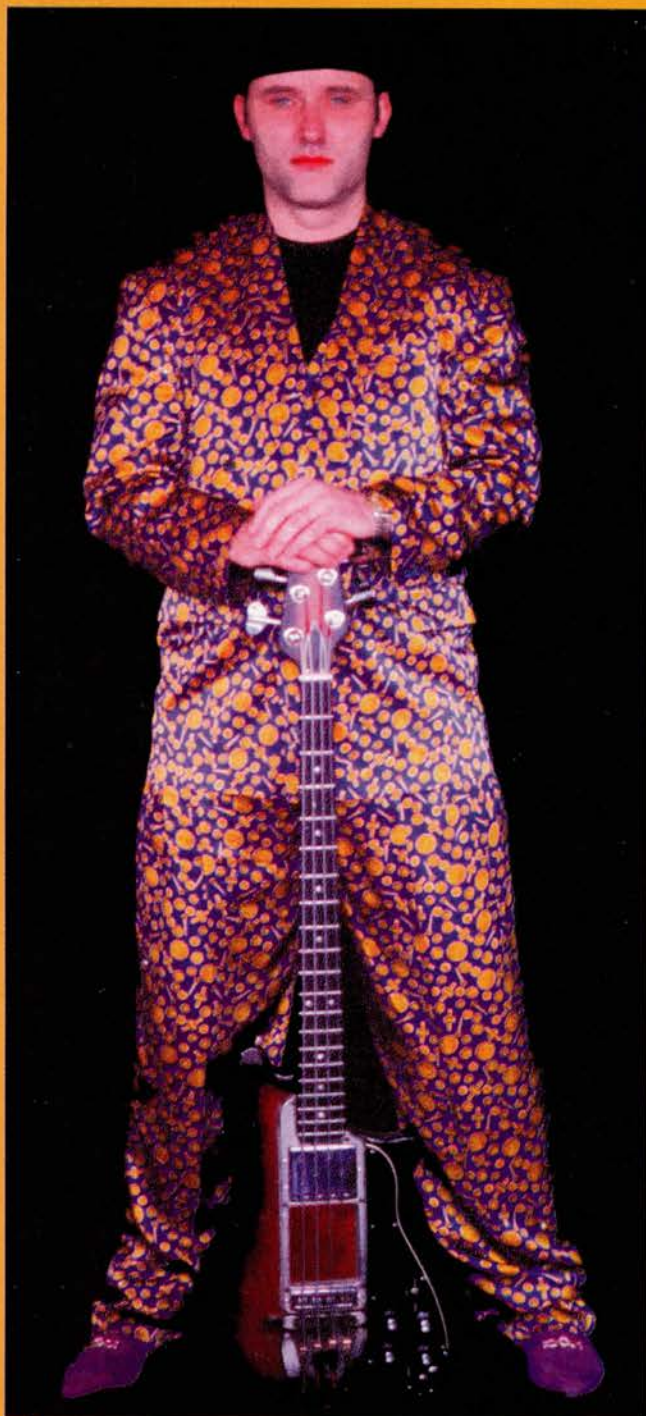
Deep Space is Wobble's current touring group, which has recorded two CDs on Jah's label, 30 Hertz (www.30hertzrecords.com). The latest, the dub-inflected *Beach Fervour Spare*, is an improvisational, atmospheric work that's best appreciated through headphones. His other recent CD couldn't be more of a departure. For years he's been a fan of Molam, a musical style native to Laos. ("It's heavy—really heavy.") He was ready to head to Southeast Asia when he came across a group of Laotian singers living in Paris. The result, *The Molam Dub*, marries the talents of the Laotian quartet and Jah's longtime collaborators, the Invaders Of The Heart. On the joyous dance record Wobble's soulful, repetitive bass lines underpin the vocalists' spirited call-and-response style.

After a long on-again/off-again relationship with Island Records, Wobble started releasing albums on his own label. It was an easy decision. "For the last couple of years everything's been so uptight in the music business—everyone's so scared. It's very hard to get financed. So I figured I'd go the other way and be completely fearless, and just do it." 30 Hertz has released ten albums in the past five years, and Wobble has continued to contribute to myriad projects, including recent work with Bill Laswell, Holger Czukay, and Sly & Robbie.

Wobble has two main basses: a '70s Ovation Magnum and a fretless '67 Ampeg AUB-1. "I like the Ovation's resonance—it's not too resonant but just resonant enough. With flatwounds it has a kind of acoustic quality, a good beefy bottom end but with a punchy, juicy thickness." (Neither the Ampeg nor the Ovation is in production anymore, although Bruce Johnson of Burbank, California, makes an updated version of the AUB and its fretted sister, the EAB.) Wobble doesn't like to spend a lot of time in the studio, believing the music's soul and passion is diluted when the hours start racking up. He recorded the Deep Space project with no rehearsals, and *Molam* took about three days to record and mix.

Onstage Jah's vintage basses go directly into his Ampeg SVT head, which feeds an 8x10 and a reflex cabinet with a 22" Gauss speaker. "I'm pretty boring—I don't use any pedals." On a recent series of gigs with the Damage Manual, Wobble used a new Marshall system with VBA400 tube heads, two 8x10s, and two 4x12s. "It's a monster rig. I had four heads in series with four cabs—it was phenomenal."

—Jack Wood



POLICE BLOTTER POLICE BLOTTER POLICE BLOTTER POLICE BLOTTER POLICE BLOTTER

L.A. session player and Musicians Institute instructor **David Hughes** had two basses stolen October 15 from his apartment in Burbank, California. His fretless Aria Pro AVB-SB Steve Bailey 6-string (serial number S4111552) is sunburst with a tortoise pickguard, Bartolini preamp, and an unpainted bevel for the right arm. It was in a blue Levy's double gig bag with the name HUGHES painted on the side. A red Fender Squier P-Bass with a white pickguard was also stolen. David can be contacted at swedbazz@earthlink.net.

On the night of September 18, **Marika Tjelios** of West Hollywood, California, had a Steinberger XL-2 (serial number 5474) stolen. Please contact Marika at Mtjelios@aol.com or (978) 376-7107 if you have any information.

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Working Stiffs



Reuben Jackson

Gig: Loni Gamble & Sound Cheque, Sugar & Spice

Location:

Williamsport, PA

Schedule: Weekends and some weekdays

Repertoire: Motown, R&B, funk

Special requirements: "Negotiat-

ing-agents are hard to find; singing lead and backing vocals; and keeping everyone focused and happy."

Gear: Warwick Corvette FNA-5, Warwick ProTube IV, Warwick 411 Pro 410 cabinet

Day job: None

Correspondence: 1735 E. Third St., Box 193, Williamsport, PA 17701

gamusic@mail.csrlink.net

Challenges: "Depending on the crowd, Loni often calls songs we haven't rehearsed, so I have to wing it and really pay attention to the keyboard player. He gives me signals to get through: He may raise four fingers indicating accents in the music, tap the top of his head to go back to the top, or make a circle with his finger if we're going to repeat a chorus. This way I can stay with the band and not be a flop, and the audience never knows what I'm going through. They just love the performance."



K.T. Tyler

Gig: Disney Cruise Lines; The Wonder since August '99; The Magic before that

Schedule: Almost every night

Repertoire: Onboard The Wonder, a different theme every night—'50s, '60s, '70s, '80s, '90s, country-western,

or Latin, depending on whether it's a three-, four-, or seven-day cruise. On The Magic, all Top 40.

Gear: Yamaha TRB-6P bass, Pedulla ET6-5A,

Pedulla Thunderbolt 6, Pedulla Rapture Custom 5, Kurzweil K2500 keyboards, Eden Metro combo amp and D-410XLT cab, Korg DTR-1 tuner, various effects

Day job: Music director for onboard shows and rehearsals

Correspondence: 7231 Indian Creek Lane #204, Las Vegas, NV 89129

Challenges: "This gig can be very challenging for a person who isn't musically experienced or emotionally disciplined. The biggest challenge is being away from my family for four to six months at a time, especially during the holidays. You get used to it, though. Aside from that, being MD means having to put up with different personalities and musical styles; the cruise line hires the musicians one by one, and we put together bands. On the plus side, you don't have to pack up after every show, there's pretty good equipment, and you don't have to worry about parking or traffic. "I practice every night from 2 AM to 6 AM. I get to travel, and I've been able to catch up on some bills. When my contract is over, I'll have saved enough money so I can go back to Vegas, spend time with my family, and choose whether or not I want to work."



Miguel Amar-Urbe

Gig: Avoiding Tom

Location: Brainerd, MN

Schedule: Mostly weekends

Repertoire: Rock, blues, funk

Gear: Peavey Cirrus 5, Cort Curbow (as a backup), Eden

WT-400 Traveler Plus, two Eden 410XLTs, Zoom 506, DOD envelope filter

Day job: Bass teacher

Correspondence: 703 28th St. SE, Brainerd, MN 56401

Challenges: "I don't like to sing harmonies, but they help the band sound better, so I work on them. No matter how bad my day has been, I try to do my best for the people who come to see us."

If you'd like to appear in *Working Stiffs*, send us a description of your gig (schedule, location, repertoire, special requirements such as vocals, clothes, etc.), detail your equipment, and describe the gig's main challenges and how you deal with them. Include your name, publishable address, and e-mail address if you have one, and a photo of yourself with your gear. If you play in a cover band, we'd love to see a copy of a typical set list. Be sure to include a phone number. To be eligible you must earn money as a bassist, but you cannot be signed to a label or play master sessions. Send to *Working Stiffs*, *BASS PLAYER*, 2800 Campus Drive, San Mateo, CA 94403. If you're spotlighted we'll send you a hip BP wearable—but if you contact us about the status of your submission, we'll send you all the Indie City CDs and tapes submitted between 1990 and 1995.

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Spectorsaurus Rex. The Spector Rex 2000 is the signature model for Pantera's Rex Brown. The Rex features a 24-fret, graphite-reinforced three-piece maple neck through a maple body, capped with a quilted maple top. Electronics include EMG-HZ pickups with 9-volt EMG circuitry. List prices are \$995 for the 34"-scale 4-string and \$1,095 for the 35"-scale 5. Spector, 1450 Rt. 212, Saugerties, NY 12477; 800-825-8810, (401) 539-8819 fax; www.spectorbass.com.



Jive talkin'. Available in 4-, 5-, and 6-string versions, the Bass Collection Jive bass features a 24-fret ebony fingerboard and 3-band active electronics coupled to SGC pickups. The 4-string lists for \$1,200; the 5 and 6 list for \$1,500. Bass Collection, 10-21, Marunouchi, 3-Chome, Naka-ku, Nagoya 460-0002, Japan; (011-81) 52-962-1254, (011-81) 52-971-0640 fax; www.nanyoboeki.co.jp/basscoll/bcolle.html.



Red-faced. Listing for \$399, the Yamaha UW500 audio/MIDI personal studio features analog inputs, digital in/out, multi-port MIDI capability, plus software for sequencing, tone generation, and editing. The UW500 can simultaneously play back up to 100 tracks. Yamaha, 6600 Orangethorpe Ave., Buena Park, CA 90620; (714) 522-9011, (714) 739-2680 fax; www.yamaha.com.



Metalhead. The Washburn RB series basses have all been updated with a J-style neck pickup and pickup blend control. The RB series also now includes the Hammerhead, a solid brass plate installed in the headstock to increase sustain. The body is made of ash or maple (depending on finish), and the two-piece maple neck has a rosewood fingerboard. The series features brushed chrome hardware and graphite nuts, and it incorporates the Buzz Feiten tuning system to improve intonation. List prices are \$899 (4-string, RB-2002), \$999 (5-string, RB-2502), and \$1,199 (6-string, RB-2602). Washburn, 444 E. Courtland St., Mundelein, IL 60060; (847) 949-0444, (847) 949-8444 fax; www.washburn.com.

New Kydd on the block. The Big Kydd is a 35"-scale version of the short-scale Carry-On electric upright bass.

The Big Kydd features a curly maple neck/body, granadillo fingerboard, Fishman pickups, a tripod, and padded case. The 4-string lists for \$2,195; the 5 lists for \$2,395. Kydd, Box 2650, Upper Darby, PA 19082; 800-622-KYDD; www.kyddbass.com.



Amp Clinic

BY TERRY BUDDINGH



DIY Amp Maintenance



Fig. 1: A cheapo paintbrush can battle built-up dirt on components such as cooling fins.

It may not be the most fun thing to do, but performing regular maintenance is one of the best ways to improve your amp's reliability and optimize its sound. Oxidation and airborne contaminants are constantly at work compromising the contact

integrity of your jacks, pots, switches, and tube sockets. Proper cleaning ensures these components make good contact and work their best.

First, a couple of important warnings: Be sure the amp is unplugged before you open it. Also, capacitors can store a high-voltage charge

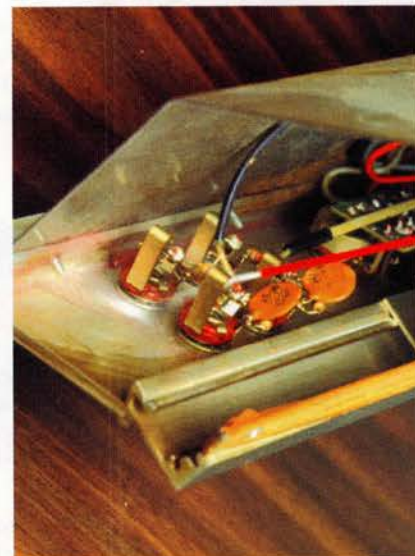


Fig. 2: Spray cleaner onto the end of the jack as well as inside its barrel.

even when an amp has been unplugged for days. Be careful! Don't touch any components with your bare hands.

Many amps have fans that circulate air over heat-producing components such as output transistors, tubes, and transformers. But besides



Fig. 3: When lubing a pot, point the shaft at the floor to reduce wasteful runoff.



Fig. 4: First clean the rocker switch, then lubricate while working it back and forth.



Fig. 5: You can spray cleaner right inside tube socket terminals.

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Amp Clinic

drawing cool air into the amp, they also draw in dirt. This can build into a surprisingly thick, furry layer that acts as a thermal insulator, reducing cooling effectiveness. The dirt needs to be removed periodically to ensure reliable operation. You can easily do this with a cheap 1"-wide paintbrush (Fig. 1), which reaches the nooks and crannies around the components. Compressed air can help once you've loosened the dirt.

Oxide buildup on jacks is a common problem; oxidation increases resistance and can cause intermittent connections. Speaker jacks are especially vulnerable; a resistance increase of even less than 1Ω can rob power from your speakers. Dirty input jacks can increase noise, which the preamp then amplifies. Caig (www.caig.com) makes several products that are excellent for cleaning and maintaining an amp's components. Caig's DeoxIT D5 dissolves

oxidation and keeps it from re-attaching, and it also leaves a thin film that protects the metal from future contamination. A little DeoxIT is usually sufficient to clean most jacks (Fig. 2). Vintage amps with neglected maintenance may require repeat applications. In that case, give the cleaning solution an hour or more to dissolve the oxidation; then remove the remaining fluid with a cotton cloth. Finish with a fresh coat of cleaner.

Insects like to hide in ¼" jacks, often leaving behind pupal remnants. Jacks are best cleaned out with a small piece of 3M Scotch-Brite wrapped around a screwdriver. A little DeoxIT sprayed on the abrasive pad helps keep the jack clean and makes it less enticing to future inhabitants.

Oxidation is less of a problem with pots. Most pots are supplied from their manufacturer with a light coating of lubricating grease. Caig's CaiLube MCL (Moving Contact Lubricant) replenishes this lubrication and leaves a fresh protective coating on the pot's carbon track and wiper. Usually a quick burst of contact lubricant is enough to flush out noise-causing contaminant (Fig. 3). Rotate the pot's shaft back and forth to distribute the fluid and suspend contaminants. Unusually dirty pots sometimes require disassembly and a complete flushing. Strong solvents are not recommended—they can attack the carbon track's binding agents, leading to deterioration.

Switches with exposed contacts, like the rocker switches Ampeg uses, can become intermittent when contaminated. A shot of DeoxIT followed by a little CaiLube MCL leaves the switches clean and working smoothly (Fig. 4).

A tube socket's metal parts are also susceptible to oxidation and corrosion. Techs have traditionally preferred solvents that don't leave any residue, since preservative agents eventually get cooked into a gummy varnish-like layer by the tube's heat. Caig's ProGold GXL is a new product that leaves a protective layer that can withstand temperatures up to 400°C. A quick burst into each terminal is all that's required (Fig. 5).

A factory-authorized service tech for major amp manufacturers, Contributing Technical Editor Terry Buddingh specializes in restoring vintage Ampeg SVTs, and he's served as amp tech for artists such as Green Day and Third Eye Blind. As an upright/electric bassist, he tours with Queen Ida's Bon Temps Zydeco Band and has gigged with Steve Allen, Mel Tormé, and Diahann Carroll.

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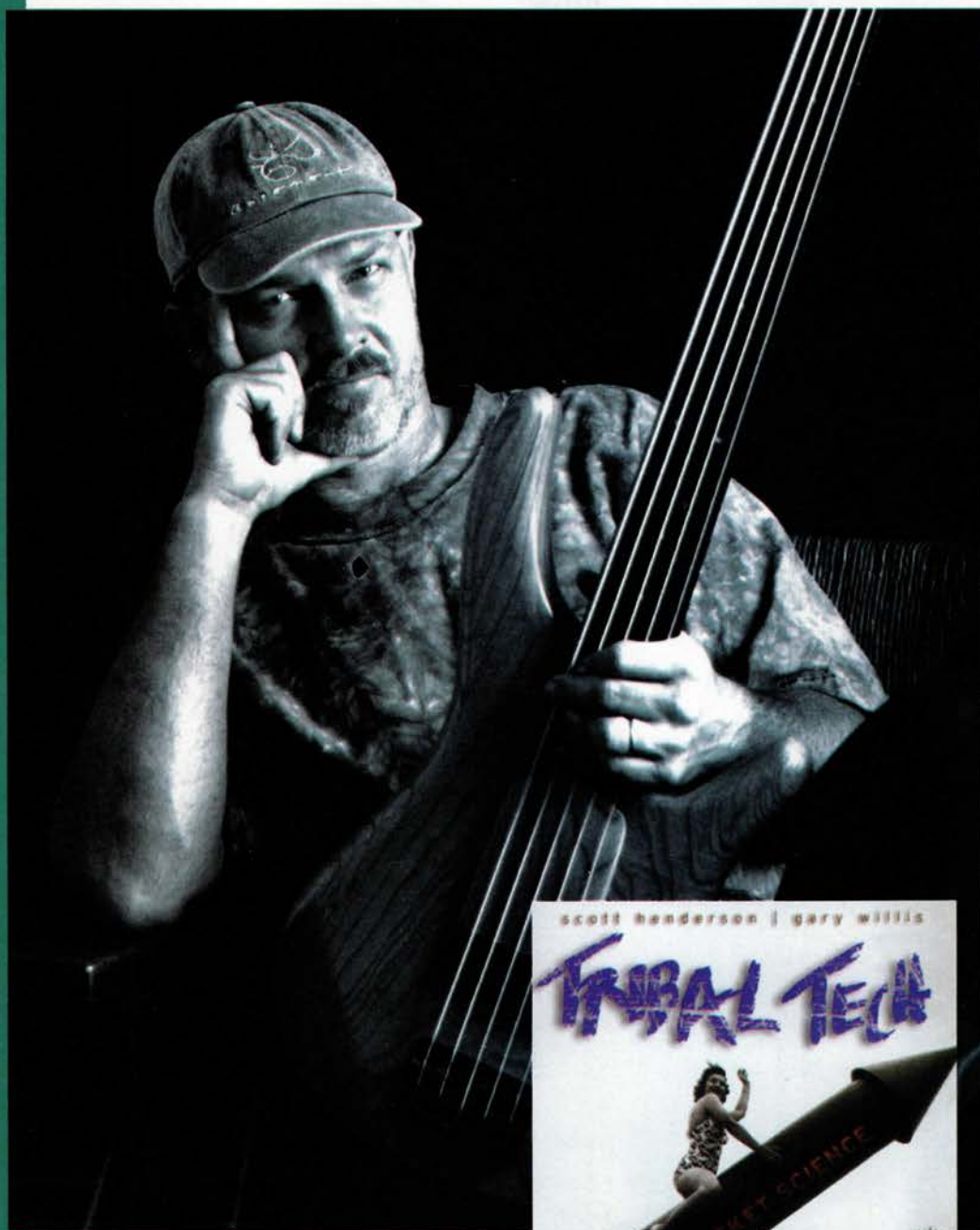
Gary Willis *Track By Track*

Tribal Tech's Rocket Science

BY CHRIS JISI

Encouraged by its '99 jam-constructed disc *Thick* [Zebra], Tribal Tech used the same spontaneous method for the follow-up, the tongue-in-cheek-titled *Rocket Science* [Tone Center]. The quartet—which also includes guitarist Scott Henderson, keyboardist Scott Kinsey, and drummer Kirk Covington—jams in the studio; then Willis, Henderson, and Kinsey take home the recorded jams and finish them by editing or adding material. “We enjoy the process, because the less you pre-compose, the more each musician’s identity can come out,” explains Gary. For maximum flexibility he recorded his fretless Ibanez Signature 5-string direct through a Retrospec Juice Box to both a clean and an effects track.

“Saturn 5”: This is really close to what we jammed, using a loop Kinsey had. Then Henderson tweaked and enhanced some of his melodies. I used my 5-string with a bit of Lexicon MPX1 octaver for the groove part. I needed to edit my solo, which I played live in the jam, so I decided to have fun with it by replacing a note here and there with a random sound, like a slide or a fingernail scrape on the strings. I punched those in using Digital Performer software. [Ex. 1 shows the blazing, muted four-bar



Ex. 1

♩ = 172
Bright funk

5 3 3 5 3 5 1 5 3 3 5 5 1 5 3 3 3 1 1 3 5 3

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Track By Track

Gary Willis *continued*

ostinato, starting at 1:59.]

"Astro Chimp": We jammed the rhythm-section parts, but there was no melody. I ended up taking a little improvised line Kinsey played toward the end, and I stretched it into a melody by adding a few notes and phrase turns. The bass effect throughout is a Lexicon MPX1 envelope follower.

"Song Holy Hall": It's pretty much what we played in the jam—including Kinsey's Buddhist choir patch. He and Henderson refined the melody later. I palm-muted most of the bass part, using no effects.

"Rocket Science": This one got its start in the drum room—I saw a stack with a china cymbal and a crash cymbal underneath, and I suggested that Kirk try using it as a high hat. He did, and we were

off. We've discovered the hardest part of the jam situation is getting that first idea. We're all good enough musicians to react, so coming up with complementary parts is easy—but finding the first spark is difficult. We jammed most of the tune, and then Kinsey layered his solo. I used some distortion from a Line 6 Bass POD. [Ex. 2 shows the greasy one-bar ostinato, beginning at 1:14.]

"Sojlevska": We chose the title

because the piece sounds like a Russian scientist, in keeping with our space-travel theme. I used no effects, and everything I play is from the jam, except for one note I changed around the middle of the track. The two Scotts then added harmonies and melodies.

"Mini-Me": This is completely as-is from the jam; there are no overdubs. At the start you can even hear us take a bar or two to find where each other's *one* is. A lot of

Ex. 2

♩ = 116
Swing



"We've discovered the hardest part of the jam situation is getting that first idea."

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Track By Track

Gary Willis *continued*

the goofy, Austin Powers vibe is from an envelope follower on my Bass POD, which randomly opens and closes, throwing back weirdly altered bass notes out of time with the groove.

"Space Camel": There are three bass tracks. On the original jam I tapped a 16th-note percussive pattern high on the fingerboard, using

one right-hand finger per string and some Lexicon MPX1 chorus. When I took home the track I realized it needed a bass part. After trying all my basses with no success, I picked up my Ibanez classical guitar—it had the acoustic quality the tune needed, so I added some Lexicon MPX1 octaver to it. Then I overdubbed my solo using my 5-string through—coincidentally—the Rocket Science envelope follower plug-in on Digital

Performer. Each of us did some additional writing for the track. [Ex. 3 shows Gary's rocking two-bar ostinato during the guitar solo, from 3:56.]

"Moonshine": This was mostly jammed, with Kinsey adding some material afterward. I used Henderson's Big Briar Moogerfooger ring modulator at the jam—but it ended up clashing with the harmony, so I had to re-process my

dry track with a different ring-mod patch.

"Cap'n Kirk": This was a segment from another jam, and later I wrote a melody based on something I had improvised, using three-bar phrases because that's where Kirk was hitting some of the kicks.

"The Econoline": The original jam had a moody, raga vibe that was boring, so we wrote and added a good amount of material. The half-harmonics-like sound at the start came from wrapping a rubber band around my 5-string's 13th fret. For my solo, on the computer I added a second note to some of my original notes to create "digital double-stops." The tune didn't end up fitting the space-travel vibe, so we named it for our 1994 Ford touring van. ♫

Ex. 3

♩ = 116
Swing

8va-

T	14	12	14	12	14	12	14	12	14	12	14
A											
B	12	12		14	12	14	12	14	12	14	12

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John Cowan



BY RUSTY RUSSELL

Keeping The (New) Grass Green

Cradling his well-worn '62 Fender Jazz, John Cowan recounts the sonic lessons he learned in his years with New Grass Revival, whose name came to identify the "newgrass" style the group helped create. "I learned to be careful of how my tone was affecting the rest of the band," says John, originally a devotee of Jaco's midrange growl. "When you're playing with a banjo and an acoustic guitarist, you can't just put on big old flatwounds and crank the bottom end, because their instruments won't speak at all. I got this Jazz when I joined NGR—I traded a Dan Armstrong Plexiglas bass for it—and that's all I used until the band's last five years, when I got a Kubicki. I played with my right-hand fingertips way back by the bridge, but on the really traditional bluegrass I moved my hand forward and played real straight. Nowadays, my fingers are right in the middle between the pickups; on the Kubicki I use only the front pickup. My sound is still pretty midrangy, though."

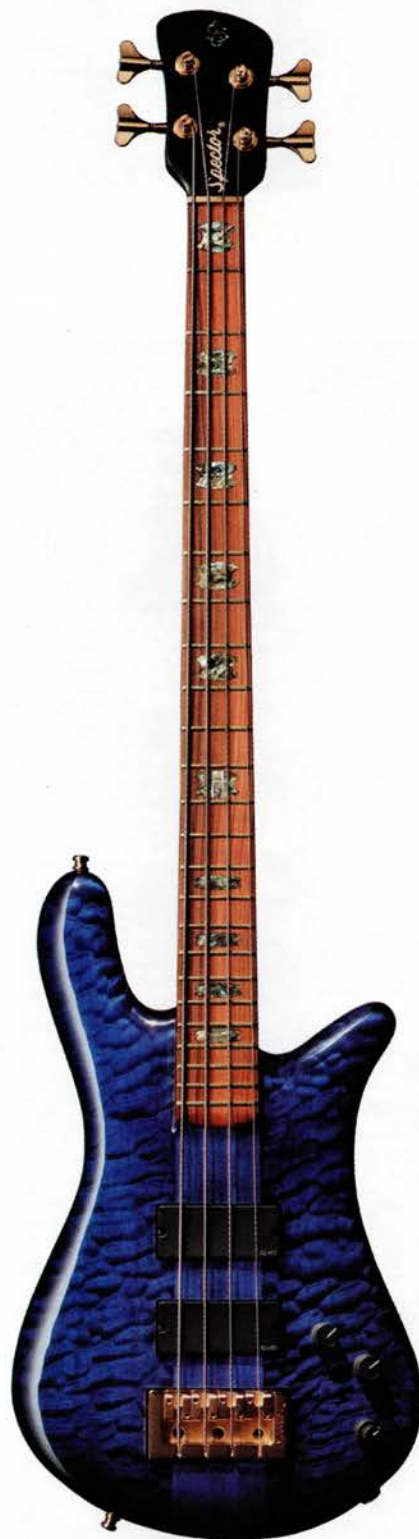
You can hear that tone on Cowan's new eponymous solo CD, which also features bass work by Michael Rhodes and Mike Brignardello. The disc serves up a broad range of groove-oriented styles, most spiced with newgrass elements and all but

"If you play your new instruments just at home, you're a wuss. Go out and make a few mistakes."

one, "Sligo," sharing the common thread of Cowan's unmistakable singing voice. "'Sligo' was a kind of statement," Cowan says, noting that the tune's driving groove and changing patterns allow him to be "the bass player I don't get to be very often. I know when people hear my name, they think 'singer' first and 'bass player' second. I'm not a Michael Rhodes or a Victor Wooten, and that's fine. I'm a guy who plays bass and sings lead, and to me they're inseparable—one thing, a very specific skill."

If Cowan's singing has overshadowed his bass playing, it's understandable. Blessed with a soulful, soaring tenor, he sang lead for 16 years with the New Grass Revival while anchoring instrumental virtuosos such as banjoist Béla Fleck (Wooten's

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Spector 

future Flecktones bandleader) and mandolinist Sam Bush. Though his solid but simple bass work was often overlooked, John set the standard for newgrass bassists and for lead-singing low-end men in general.

While Cowan has built a reputation as a foundation player, he admits a history of chop-chasing. First influenced by Chris Squire, Jack Bruce, Little Feat's Kenny Gradney, and the Allman Brothers' Berry Oakley, the budding bassist worked with cover and original bands in Louisville, Kentucky, after graduating from high school. "The only time I ever got fired from a gig

A Selected Discography

Solo albums: (both on Sugar Hill) *John Cowan*; *Soul'd Out*. **With the New Grass Revival:** *New Grass Revival*, EMI; (all on Flying Fish) *Commonwealth*; *Barren County*; *Fly Through the Country*. **With Sam Bush:** *Late as Usual*, Rounder; *Glamour & Grits*, Sugar Hill. **With Béla Fleck:** (all on Rounder) *Places*; *Inroads*; *Deviations*. **With Sky Kings:** *From Out of the Blue*, Rhino Handmade.

was for playing too much. It was Jack Casady time—I was way too busy, but I just couldn't help

myself. On the other hand, I remember buying Sam & Dave records and learning Duck Dunn's lines, so I had that as a reference, too. Like a lot of people, it took me a while to figure out the value of playing a supporting role. That's the big maturing point for most bass players."

Cowan joined NGR for its second CD, 1975's *Fly Through the Country*, replacing Ebo Walker. The band recorded several influential albums before breaking up in 1989, leaving Cowan casting about for his next career step. "I flirted with a few things," recalls the longtime Nashville resident. "I had a kind of semi-hard rock band going, like Free or Bad Company. We had a record deal, but it eventually fell apart. After that was the Sky Kings, with Patrick Simmons from the Doobie Brothers and Rusty Young from Poco. We did one great record, but the band ate up about five years and then kind of fizzled." Cowan also piled up sideman credits with stars such as with Leon Russell, John Hartford, and Maura O'Connell while maintaining a busy session-singer schedule.

His solo direction became clear while he was touring and recording with Sam Bush. "On that gig I became comfortable with the idea of being a 'newgrass' musician. NGR was such an anomaly—a rock & roll bass player with an R&B voice playing in a band with banjo, mandolin, and guitar—no drums—doing everything from Bob Marley to Bill Monroe to Marvin Gaye. I guess I didn't recognize that as a viable path. Touring with Sam made me realize that, as weird as it seems, what makes the most sense is my voice with an acoustic-oriented band."

Despite Cowan's long relationship with his ancient Fender—and the soft spot he has for the Polytone 1x15 combo that saw him through NGR and beyond—he's not a vintage purist. He played the Kubicki exclusively on *John Cowan*, and on tour he plans to use a recently acquired Lakland 5 and a piezo-loaded Harry Fleishman Anti-Gravity 5. "It weighs *nothing*," Cowan says. "Even though I'm not used to a 5, I've been taking it to the gig. If you sit and play your new instruments just at home, you're a wuss. Go out and make a few mistakes and get used to it." Cowan strings with D'Addario and plays through a Trace Elliot GB12SMX amp with a Trace 4x10 and 1x15; to smaller rooms he takes a 1x15 Crate BX2115 combo. He also uses a Mutron envelope follower and an EBS OctaBass; you can hear them both on "Roll Away the Stone" and "Wichita Way."

Currently touring to support his new CD, Cowan feels he's found a comfortable niche. "Making this record—which took about two years—I realized the only continuity in my life is diversity. Even though the thread of my voice holds things together, I go in a lot of different musical directions. But I'm happy with the label 'newgrass bass player,' and if I've brought something to that table—the feel or the soul element or whatever—then I'm satisfied."

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Sara Lee

Red Shoes Step Out

BY E.E. BRADMAN

When Sara Lee sat down in late 1998 to shape her first solo album, all she had were basic sketches recorded at soundchecks and between tours with the Indigo Girls, Joan Osborne, and Ani DiFranco. Six months later, Lee had a revelation: She wanted to make a danceable album that would make people happy. "I just wanted a joyful record you could move to. I modified a couple of things I had been working on, and went from there."

Make It Beautiful, released on DiFranco's Righteous Babe label, is Lee's debut as a singer and songwriter, and she's enjoying *almost* every minute. "Being a bandleader's great. All the musical aspects are amazing, but the logistics are pretty hellish. I thought I worked hard when I was just the bass player—but this is ridiculous!" After 20 years as a sideperson, however, she's learned a thing or two. "I know how my band feels. I've worked with a lot of artists who've never been sidepeople, and they just don't understand what the musicians need. Of course, we don't know what the artists need, either, but I'm just now finding out," she laughs. "The great thing about keep-

ing a band together is that the musicians develop a tremendous rapport—and that's one of the most rewarding things you can do as a sideperson."

Lee grew up in Hereford, England, home of the Three Choirs Festival since the 18th century. "My parents are music teachers, so I was in a lot of orchestras, and I played piano and everything else from a very young age. My father was a bass singer in the Hereford Cathedral choir, and I went to the Three Choirs Festival every year until I was 16. I made friends with the timpanist and sat with him in the afternoons, watching and learning."

At the time, Sara wanted to be a timpanist more than anything in the world—a desire that was thwarted by her poor grades and subsequent inability to go to a proper music college. "I got a double bass at 11, and I liked it, but not like I loved the timpani. But of course it stood me in very good stead, because it helped me pick up the bass guitar very quickly." Her playing and listening habits gradually widened, and early groove education came from the Godfather of Soul. "I've been dancing to 'Sex Machine' since I was 15. Musically, James Brown is pretty much the love of my life. These days, what I love to do more than anything is play a great groove anyone can dance to." When a friend asked her to play bass in a band, she

quickly accepted. Lee got her big break when she met and recorded with King Crimson founder Robert Fripp, which led to work with Robyn Hitchcock and punk icons Gang Of Four.

Since then, the woman DiFranco jokingly calls a "band slut" has been enlivened and challenged by the diversity of the music she's played; her diverse resumé also includes the Thompson Twins, Ryuichi Sakamoto, and Fiona Apple. "Fripp, Indigo Girls, Ani DiFranco, the B-52's, Gang Of Four—those are all pretty different. When you use your own style with different types of music, it makes you a more diversified sideperson. For example, I'm such a low-end groove player and non-technician that I never played up high. I used to joke that I never used the G string until I joined the Indigo Girls, but I found their music very melodic and much more sparse than a lot I had been playing. It left room for me, so I ended up playing higher up the neck."

In the course of her career, Lee says her collaboration with DiFranco was special. "Ani was as close as I would get to the artist of my dreams; her music was the most compatible to my playing style. She had songs where I could get in a groove and stay there, and it would be so much fun. But she also she had softer songs that cried

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Sara Lee *continued*

out for melodic, beautiful bass lines. She satisfied my melodic and groove sides." During her tenure with Ani, Lee acquired her ubiquitous red shoes, a trademark that graces the *Make It Beautiful* cover. "Ani mentioned them one day from stage and featured them in the *Living In Clip* booklet, and from then on—even when I was with the Indigo Girls—fans would ask me if I would be wearing the red shoes. I figured if it was that important, why not?" she laughs.

Lee's new album features her breathy vocals and juicy, upfront bass lines on originals and collaborations with DiFranco, Emily Saliers of the

Indigo Girls, and others. She left the Girls at the end of '97, toured briefly with Osborne, and then started working on her solo project. "Sometimes I'd start with keyboard chords and the bass line would come in later. I worked every different way, from just playing with a drum loop to coming up with a few chords on guitar or using stuff I had recorded on tour."

Lee took her band to the studio on her own money. "I funded this myself, so I wasn't able to block out months in the studio. In three days, the band did nine songs on 2" 24-track tape. We transferred the tapes to Pro Tools and worked at producer Peter Scherer's studio for the next six months. Between my gigs and his, we worked whenever we could." When she asked Sting/Dire Straits producer

Neil Dorfsman to recommend a good up-and-coming mixing engineer, he offered to do it himself, one of many lucky breaks. "Making this record was full of happy accidents and coincidences. I didn't have any kind of a budget or anything. I just asked the people I wanted to work with, and everybody said yes. It was the most amazing experience."

Lee, a first-time frontperson, sang and played with her album to prepare for her short tour last fall, when she opened for DiFranco on two weeks of East Coast dates. "I practiced until I was able to play the bass lines without even thinking about them. The projection and expression I put into the lyrics has to be the first thing I think of. After all these years, the bass part comes naturally."

A Selected Discography

Solo album: *Make It Beautiful*, Righteous Babe. **With Ani DiFranco:** (both on Righteous Babe) *Little Plastic Castle*; *Living in Clip*. **With Indigo Girls:** (all on Epic, except where noted) *Retrospective*, Sony; *Shaming of the Sun*, Sony; *1200 Curfews*; *Swamp Ophelia*; *Rites of Passage*; *Live: Back on the Bus, Y'all*; *Nomads Indians Saints*. **With the B-52's:** *Time Capsule*, Warner Bros.; *Good Stuff*, Reprise; *Cosmic Thing*, Reprise. **With Gang Of Four:** (both on Warner Bros.) *A Brief History of the Twentieth Century*; *Songs of the Free*; *Hard*. **With Fiona Apple:** *Tidal*, Sony. **With Ferron:** *Phantom Center*, Chameleon. **With Andy Summers & Robert Fripp:** *Bewitched*, A&M. **With Robert Fripp:** *God Save the King*, EG. **With League Of Gentlemen:** (both on EG) *League of Gentlemen*; *Thrang Thrang Gozinbulx*. **With Kristen Hall:** (both on High Street) *Be Careful What You Wish For*; *Fact and Fiction*.

Early in her career, Lee used a '66 P-Bass, a StingRay 5, and a Spector 4. Since 1990 she has exclusively played G&L's, mostly 5-strings with medium-light Dean Markleys. Lee plugs into a 200-watt Matchless Thunderchief head with 4x10 and 1x15 Trace Elliot cabinets. "I started playing the 5-string with the Thompson Twins in 1987, and I used it with the B-52's as well. But for the seven years I was with the Indigo Girls, I didn't need to play that low; there was nothing between me and their acoustic guitars, and those low notes sounded completely out of place. But now that I'm doing my own thing, I'm using the 5."

At the moment, Lee is aiming for an amicable balance of solo and side work. "I want my band to be my main focus. Right now it's costing me a fortune, so I need to keep my income steady by working with other people. I'm just praying that I'm given a year to have my own band, even if it never goes any further. I'm having such a good time playing with my band every night—I hope I make enough money to keep them with me and enjoy this while it lasts." ✱

See music, page 46

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SIMPLE STYLE

Sara Lee uses simplicity and a sense of space in her playing. Ex. 1 shows the smart line that appears every four bars in some variation under the verses of "Roam" by the B-52's ('89's *Cosmic Thing*). Lee leaves room for every beat two snare, and by putting bar 2's new root, A, on the "and" of one, she adds a special kick to the harmonic rhythm. The descending line in bar 3 and eighth-note figure in bar 4 give a feeling of melodic movement.

True to its name, Lee's part in the Indigo Girls' "Least Complicated" (*Swamp Ophelia*) uses spacious quarter-notes and a simple chord-tone melody to outline the chord changes leading to A major in Ex. 2. A different, more aggressive Lee is one-third of Ani DiFranco's forward-tilt groove on "In or Out" from 1997's *Living in Clip*, but her walking quarter-note line in bars 2 and 4 harmonically implies much more than DiFranco's guitar part. In bars 1 and 3 of Ex. 3, she accents the rhythms played by Ani and drummer Andy Stochansky. Lee's juicy G&L tone is nowhere more evident than on *Make It Beautiful*. The bouncy line from the "Traffic" chorus (Ex. 3) is a Sara Lee favorite. "It's very simple—only one or two notes—but it's the rhythm of it that I like."

Ex. 1

♩ = 140 E A D C#(no 3rd) B

T
A
B

0 0 0 0 0 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 4 4 2 5 0 2 5 2 5

Ex. 2

♩ = 135 Bm C#m D E A

T
A
B

2 2 4 2 0 4 2 2 5 0 2 5 0 2 5

etc.

Ex. 3

♩ = 140 F#m7

T
A
B

2 4 4 4 4 2 5 2 4 2 2 4 4 (4) 2 2 5 4 5 2

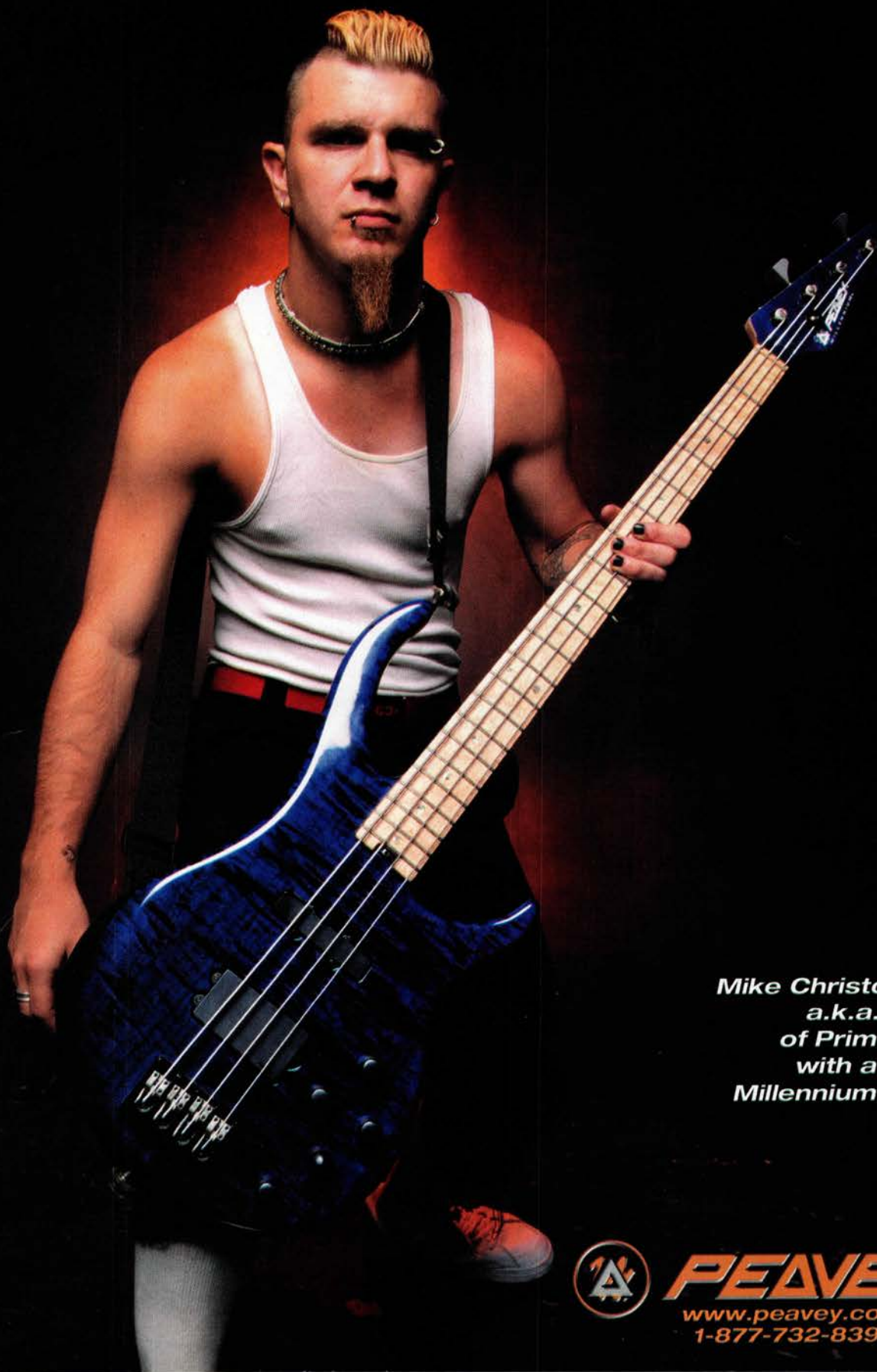
Ex. 4

♩ = 83 Dm Em Am C

T
A
B

5 5 5 (3) 5 5 5 7 5 (6) 7 7 5 7 5 5 7 5

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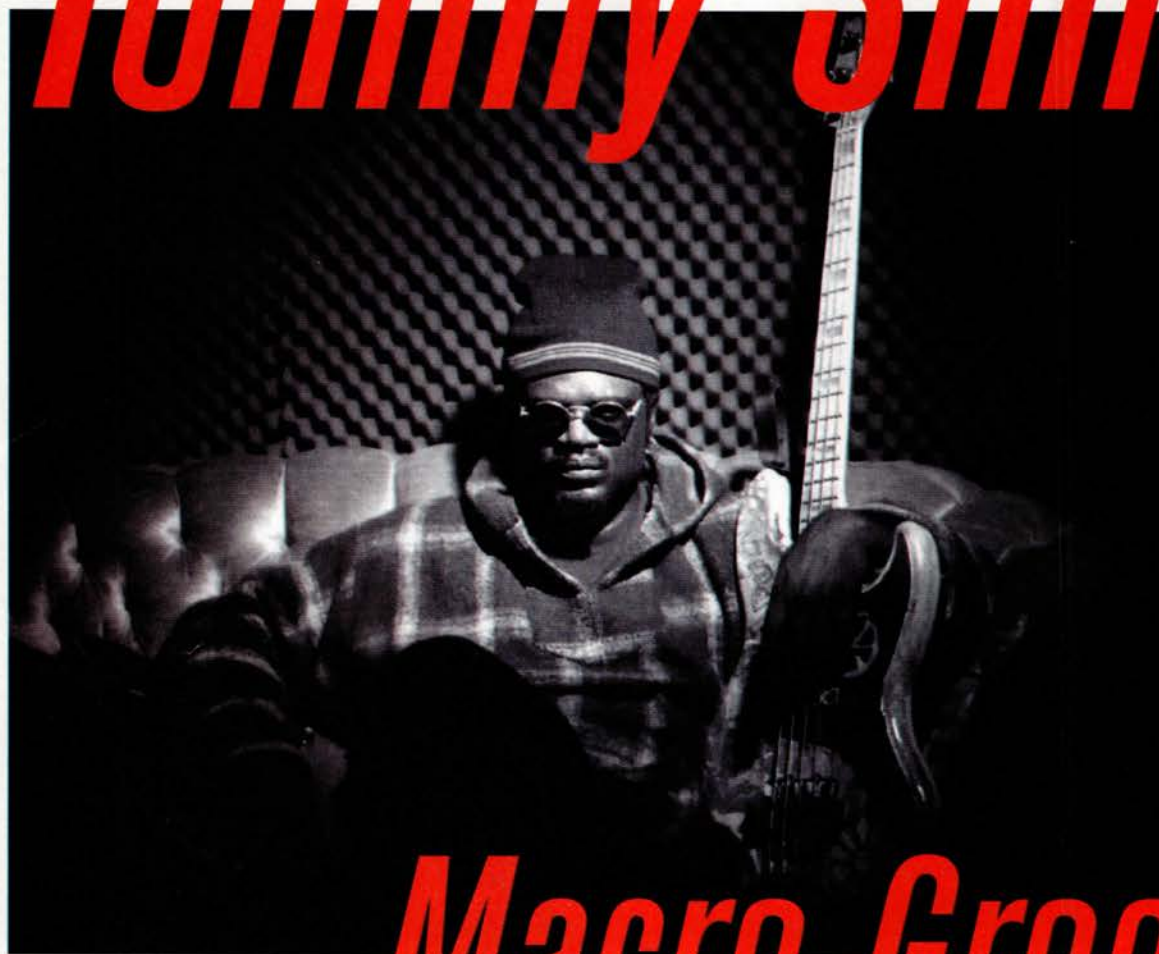
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Tommy Sims



Macro Grooves

Tommy Sims has a passion for the big picture. His muscular lines are usually just what the song requires—no less, no more. His solo debut, *Peace and Love*, proves he's also a gifted multi-instrumentalist and singer. And in an era when bass players are moving beyond their traditional rhythm-section role, Sims is steadily carving a niche as a producer, arranger, and writer with an ear for the groove.

"I love being just the bass player, coming in to collaborate with other cats on the date," says Sims, who has worked with Bruce Springsteen, Garth

Brooks, Eric Clapton (Sims co-wrote the Grammy-winning "Change the World"), the Neville Brothers, and others. "I don't do much of that anymore, but when people call me to play bass, they throw up the track and leave the room: 'Just put the bass part on there—we know you'll figure out what to do.'"

A Chicago native, Sims first picked up bass as an 11-year-old in his family's Baptist church, absorbing the sounds of gospel and Motown and becoming proficient on several instruments through high school. After studying music at Western Michigan College and the University of Michigan, Sims began working in Nashville in the late '80s. He soon became a busy player and songwriter on the city's contemporary Christian

BY E.E. BRADMAN



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Tommy Sims *continued*

music scene, contributing to critically acclaimed releases by Amy Grant, Michael W. Smith, Margaret Becker, and others. By 1990, Sims was commuting to Los Angeles to work with John Cougar Mellencamp/R.E.M. producer Don Gehman, programming, playing bass and keyboards, and co-producing. Since then, Sims has learned to change his approach depending on the situation. "In hip-hop and R&B, the producer is called upon to do everything but sing the song; the label wants the artist to be able to show up and sing. But if I'm producing rock, I may be asked to shape raw material into something the radio will play."

A Selected Discography

(* = produced and played on)

Solo album: *Peace and Love*, Cherry/Universal. **With Bruce Springsteen:** *Music from the Motion Picture Soundtrack: The Streets of Philadelphia*, Epic; *Plugged: In Concert*, Sony; *A Tribute to Curtis Mayfield*, Warner Bros. **With Charlie Peacock:** *Strange Language*, Chordant; *Secret of Time*, Sparrow. **With Margaret Becker:** (all on Sparrow) *Grace*; *Soul*; *Steps of Faith* 1985-1992; *Never for Nothing*. **With Selena:** *Dreaming of You*, EMI Latin. **With Amy Grant:** (all on A&M) *Behind the Eyes*; *House in Love*; *Heart in Motion*. **With Michael W. Smith:** (both on Geffen) *Change Your World*, *Go West Young Man*. **With Michael McDonald:** *Blue Obsession**, Ramp. **With the Neville Brothers:** *Valence Street**, Columbia. **With Garth Brooks:** *In the Life of Chris Gaines**, Capitol. **With Michael Bolton:** *Greatest Hits**, Columbia. **With Michael English:** *Michael English*, Curb; (on Warner Bros.) *Michael English*; *Healing*; *Hope*.

Tommy's wide range of experience makes *Peace and Love* an appealing showcase for his diverse skills. From acoustic, bass-less Jim Croce covers to Old School jams to sweeping orchestral arrangements, Sims proves that his greatest strength as a bassist is a well-developed ability to make his soulful parts integral to their surroundings. Like another bass-playing producer, Larry Klein, he grooves like an arranger with one eye on the production, building his lines in the context of the final product.

Surprisingly, Sims downplays the bass chair as a head start for producers. "Other producers might call in a bass player or lean on the drummer to find the pocket. When I listen, I instantly hear where the pocket is. But that's probably the only edge I have as a bassist who produces; all the other stuff comes from studying harmony, the other instruments, arrangements, and vocalists." Although he acknowledges the influence of R&B





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bass players of the past, he doesn't identify strictly as a bassist. "I don't consider myself a bass player any more than I am a guitar player or pianist. I realized all of these things are just functions of the song, so I stopped studying bass players and started working on my songwriting and arranging."

Most of *Peace and Love* was recorded at Tommy's Nashville home studio. His main bass is a '76 Fender Jazz with a Sadowsky preamp. He also uses a '62 Jazz and a Yamaha BBN5A 5-string. "The '62 has a good, funky Verdine White type of thing, and it's more tight and focused. The '76

has big, wide bottom end, and the Yamaha is basic and very functional." For Minimoog sounds, he uses a Studio Electronics Midimoog and SE-1, as well as custom equipment. Sims is always experimenting with amp tones and DI boxes, and he notes much of the CD's bass was recorded direct. "When I feel the bass line is right there, I'll sit down and plug in directly—I know I can grab one of these old Fender basses and put the part to tape, even if I come back later and redo it." Live, he uses an Eden 4x10 with an Eden World Tour 800 head. Tommy strings all his basses with

GHS Boomers, .045–.105.

Although he's not a fan of large-scale tours, Sims is reservedly enthusiastic about taking his band One World, a loose collective of Nashville studio players, on the road. When he does, he'll probably shy away from pyrotechnics and special effects. "I think I know more about bass lines and pockets than I do about how to make use of a 7-string. I'm just your basic 4-string cat—and for me, it's all about Bernard Edwards, James Jamerson, and those cats who made whole songs out of a bass line."



Down-Home Economics

Tommy Sims's playing may be economical, but when he plays, he *plays*. After a long intro on "New Jam" (from *Peace and Love*), Sims kicks into the insistent octave *Dm7* pulse of Ex. 1's bar 1; he then tosses off fills like the one in bar 2, which occurs at 3:43. Typically Tommy uses few notes, but his quarter-note groove with accents is straightforward and undeniable. Without altering the feel, Sims adds harmonic tension with a tasty two-bar scalar move before landing on the low *A*, implying the *V* (Ex. 2).

Ex. 3 marks the transition to the bridge at 4:00 with a minor-3rd shift upward to *Fm7*. Here Sims continues the octave feel with slight ornamentation in bar 3 and a trickier fill in bar 5—a rhythmic 1st-position figure followed by a rest on the downbeat, after which he returns to the groove. Other factors worth noting: Tommy's rich tone, his command of muted and staccato notes, and the relaxed feel of even the trickiest packages.

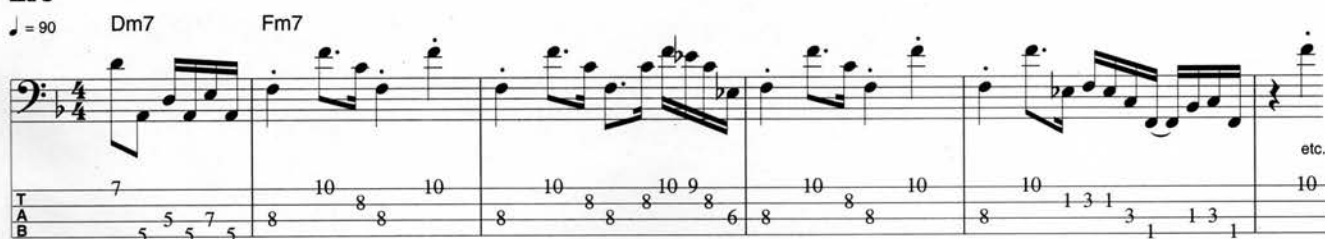
Ex. 1



Ex. 2




Ex. 3



*"It's all about
Bernard Edwards,
James Jamerson,
and those cats who
made whole songs
out of a bass line."*





No Rush

Geddy Lee

Flexes His Muscles In A Powerful Solo Debut

During Geddy Lee's 32 years as the frontman of Rush, what fan hasn't imagined his lofty vocals or grinding bass lines in a setting other than the Toronto super-trio? It took an aligning of events both serious and frivolous, but Geddy has at long last made his solo debut with *My Favorite Headache*.

The 11-track CD is actually a collaboration with composer/multi-instrumentalist and fellow Canadian Ben Mink, best known for his work with k.d. lang. The pair combines singer/songwriter craft with raw rock adrenaline—thanks in part to Soundgarden/Pearl Jam stickman Matt Cameron—wrapping it in a package with big, sparkling production. The result is likely to intrigue old fans and garner new ones. We met Geddy on a late afternoon at Atlantic Records' midtown Manhattan offices. It may

By Chris Jisi

Photograph By Andrew McNaughton

Geddy Lee *continued*

have been Rush hour outside, but inside it was clearly Geddy's moment.



After all these years, what made you finally decide to record a solo project?

While Rush was touring in 1997, I went to Vancouver to hang out with my longtime pal Ben Mink. We had always joked about playing together to see if anything would come of it, so we went into his home studio and started jamming. After

a few minutes we looked at each other in disbelief and both said, "Hey—you play like me!" We made a commitment, and over the next year and a half we got together every three months to write. Eventually we put five songs in reasonable shape to see what we could do with them. At the time, we were thinking along the lines of finding another artist to produce and write for. I didn't have a taste for my own record; I didn't want to step outside of Rush, and I didn't want all the attention it would draw to me. Finally I sent the songs to my buddy at Atlantic, Val Azzoli, who said, "Don't be an idiot—make a record." Ben, who prefers a low-profile collaborator role, felt it was most practical to put out the album in my name. So based on my belief in the material, I agreed to do it.



Lee in '97 with the Wal he debuted on the Roll the Bones tour. "It has a slightly warmer sound than the black Wal," he told BP in May '92.

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How did that change the project's direction?

With a label in place we got much more serious about writing, and I wrote more on bass. As a result, the new songs had a raw, edgier feel. We decided to co-produce the record ourselves, later bringing in David Leonard to help, which meant the next step was finding the right drummer. Engineer Adam Casper suggested Matt Cameron. After listening to Soundgarden's albums we agreed wholeheartedly.

We had recorded the basic song structures on a Logic Audio 24-bit hard-disk system, including scratch bass and vocals, so we took that to Matt in Seattle. He was amazing—he nailed every song. Then I went back in and played my final bass tracks to Matt's drums, although I kept some of my original parts that Matt brought to life.

What gear did you use?

The only bass I played was my '72 Fender Jazz. It has a maple neck, a Badass bridge, and the original pickups, which I keep full-on, occasionally backing off the neck pickup a bit. Fender made me a really nice reproduction of the bass, but nothing sounds quite as good as the original. My strings are Rotosound Swing Bass long-scale roundwounds, which I changed about every other song. I laid down my initial bass part the same way on every tune, using three tracks: One was straight from an Avalon U5 direct box, the second was from a Palmer PDI-05 Speaker Simulator to get the low-end punch of a miked amp, and

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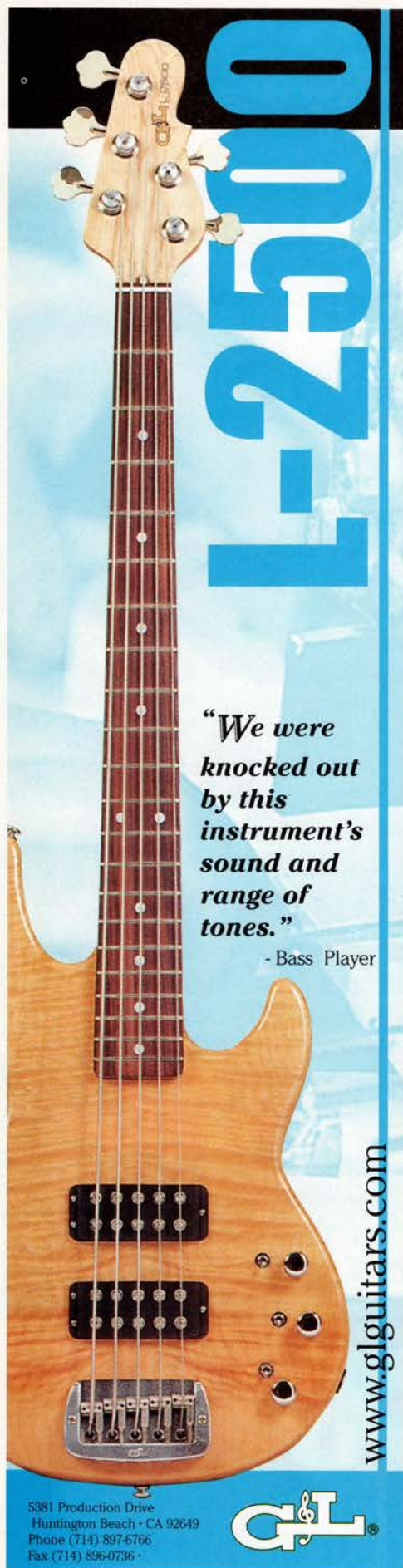
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Geddy Lee *continued*

the third was from either a Tech 21 SansAmp Bass Driver DI or a SansAmp PSA-1 guitar unit, depending on what kind of distortion I wanted. That enabled me to favor whichever sound I wanted in the final mix, instead of having to get insane with EQ. I also added bass overdubs on many of the songs.

What was your bass approach to the music?

It began with actually writing a lot on bass—using the instrument in a guitar-like way to come up with chordal patterns, song sections, and forms. Jeff Berlin has always blown me away with his ability to use chords, so he was my inspiration in that way. It took me away from Rush's riff-oriented material to a more meaty, singer/songwriter place.

From there I could take a textural approach to the bass via layering parts, as opposed to having one obvious part noodling up and down the fretboard. If I started with a distorted rhythm guitar-type line, it would call for low-end support, and then maybe some high-end melodic stuff. My ultimate goal was to serve the songs by adding width and depth to them.

The album opens with a lone bass riff on the title track.

At the end of the day I am a bass player before anything, so I thought it was an appropriate way to kick things off. But then I add an overdriven,

bolero-like bass chord track sent through the SansAmp Bass Driver. [See music, page 62.] The song has a dark, brooding, atonal quality.

"The Angel's Share" highlights a recurring theme, your soaring melodic bass work.

Throughout the process I'd sometimes get an idea for a melody and think, Let's try it on bass. I'd use smooth distortion from the SansAmp for a nice, sweet sustain and overdub the idea on an extra track. Later, as we were mixing and calling up all the tracks on each song, some of those ideas worked and some were unnecessary—but it was important to make sure I had tried all the melodic possibilities. "Angel's Share" is a good example: I kept my demo part, and because Matt played all those bombastic drum patterns in the choruses, I overdubbed some outrageous, zooming bass lines to fit. Then, just as we were about to put away the track, I added the high melodic line halfway through the last chorus, which reprises itself during the outro solo.

Your tone is especially big on "Runaway Train" and "Grace to Grace."

On those songs I played only one bass part and used the three-track recording method. We went for a huge bottom end in both cases, and that's where the digital side really came through. We ran 24-track analog in sync with the Logic Audio system, and a lot of times the digital side just seemed to have more depth. The Avalon U5 helped as well, as did playing with the soft part of my fingertips and using less fingernail. On



Geddy in 1980 with Rickenbacker 4080/12 bass/12-string guitar. "The bass has a really nice tone because of the larger body size," Lee told *Guitar Player* in June '80.

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"Train" I had a good part down originally, but after hearing Matt groove so hard I went back in to really lock with his drums. As with a lot of the album's songs, these two tunes have a feel that's different from anything Rush would ever do. That's largely because Matt is happy to nail down the groove, whereas [Rush drummer/lyricist] Neil Peart is constantly looking to build complexity.

"Moving to Bohemia" probably comes the closest to a Rush vibe.

I guess you could say that. I basically decided to have a gargantuan pig-out on bass, playing all over the place and letting the song feed off it. It's

"At the end of the day I am a bass player before anything."

only one bass part tracked three ways, but I added plenty of the guitar SansAmp track, which is heavily distorted. I plunk away kind of relentlessly through the extended ending, where we really rock out.

"Home on the Strange" has a similarly reckless bass attitude.

That was cut live in the 11th hour with myself,

Ben, and [Our Lady Peace drummer] Jeremy Taggart. After spending so much time polishing and orchestrating the other songs, I wanted something more spontaneous and loose. So Ben and I went in one weekend, wrote the song, brought in Jeremy, and recorded it. Then I plugged the Fender into a heavily distorted SansAmp Bass Driver and a Vox wah pedal and overdubbed two more tracks. They double some of the bass and rhythm guitar lines, and in the instrumental bridge I have them panned left and right, trading licks and answering each other.

"Present Tense" and "Window to the World" bring out a fresh vocal approach to go with your multi-bass concept.

Yes, the vocals are somewhat different from what I do in Rush. It's the first album in a while where I sing very high. I experimented with stacked vocals and various harmony shadings, because my voice has a sweeter tone as it goes higher, but that didn't suit all the songs. The lyrics also had a big affect on the vocals, particularly rhythmically.

Why did it take you so long to return to writing words?

Basically because Neil is so good at it. I hadn't written lyrics since Rush's early days, so I was self-conscious at first—but once I got over the initial shock of hearing my words coming back at me, it was great. It turned out to be a very important process personally; it allowed me to work through a lot of things that have been on my mind. I want to keep doing it, because it's a more complete way to express myself.

Your use of a string section is a key sonic thread throughout—especially on "Working @ Perfekt" and "Moving to Bohemia."

Ben and I heard strings as an important color. Interestingly, some songs sounded better with real strings, while synth strings worked better on others. I also learned that by adding a bit of synth strings to real strings, you can get a full-blown orchestral sound. For "Bohemia" we wanted an aggressive, sort of Russian attitude from real strings, so Ben studied the works of Russian composers before he wrote the parts.

Are those loops on "Slipping"?

Yes—that song has some techno loop pulses and a morse code-like pattern I did on my Virus synthesizer. If you listen closely, throughout the album you can hear collages of layered sounds, like wind noises and subtle techno beats, which we mixed in to keep everything moving forward.

"Still" stands a bit apart from the rest of the songs musically.

That was one of the first ones we wrote, and

"my sound"

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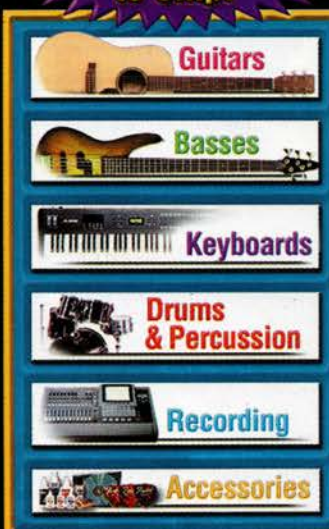
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Geddy Lee *continued*

we weren't sure if it was strong enough for the album, but everyone seems to love it. It has a pop aspect. Matt listened to it and demanded to play on it—and then [producer] David Leonard told us we'd be crazy to leave it off. I play an arpeggio chordal part, a low-end part, and a melody part.

Where did the album's title come from?

Ben's dad was telling him a story about something that happened to his mother, and he said, in his Polish accent, "and right away, she gets the favorite headache." Once I stopped laughing, I realized what a great phrase that is, and I became determined to use it. It represents my sort of reluc-

A Selected Discography

Solo album: *My Favorite Headache*, Atlantic.
With Rush: (on Atlantic) *Different Stages*; *Test for Echo*; *Counterparts*; *Roll the Bones*; *Presto*; (on Mercury) *A Show of Hands*; *Hold Your Fire*; *Power Windows*; *Grace Under Pressure*; *Signals*; *Exit, Stage Left*; *Moving Pictures*; *Permanent Waves*; *Hemispheres*; *A Farewell to Kings*; *2112*; *All the World's a Stage*; *Fly by Night*; *Caress of Steel*; *Rush*.

tant relationship with making music: I love it passionately, but it drives me crazy, because once I

get into a project I'm completely consumed by it.

What music has caught your ear lately?

I love the Chili Peppers' *Californication*, and I saw Pearl Jam live recently for the first time. Both Flea and Jeff Ament are great. I also like Radiohead's Colin Greenwood; his parts are basic but melodically interesting. I dig Bjork's *Homogenic*, especially her use of strings and electronic percussion. I listen to some of the drum-n-bass and trip-hop stuff. And I always keep an ear on the players who influenced me: Jack Bruce, Jack Casady, John Entwistle, Chris Squire, and Phil Lesh. Jeff Berlin has asked me to do a vocal track on his upcoming album, which should be fun.

What's the status of Rush?

Our last tour was in spring 1997, and we've been on hiatus since '98 for a number of reasons. I talk to Alex [Lifeson] once a week—he's been producing artists and writing for the TV show *Andromeda*—and Neil and I stay in touch through letters or e-mail. We're definitely getting together in early 2001 to write and record our next album; that's my next major project.


*What's the remedy for *My Favorite Headache*?*

We're going to wait and see how it's received. Initially I'll do a tour around the U.S. and maybe do a few small gigs. This was a nice start to a co-writing relationship with Ben, and hopefully with others. More than anything, it has opened new possibilities for me.

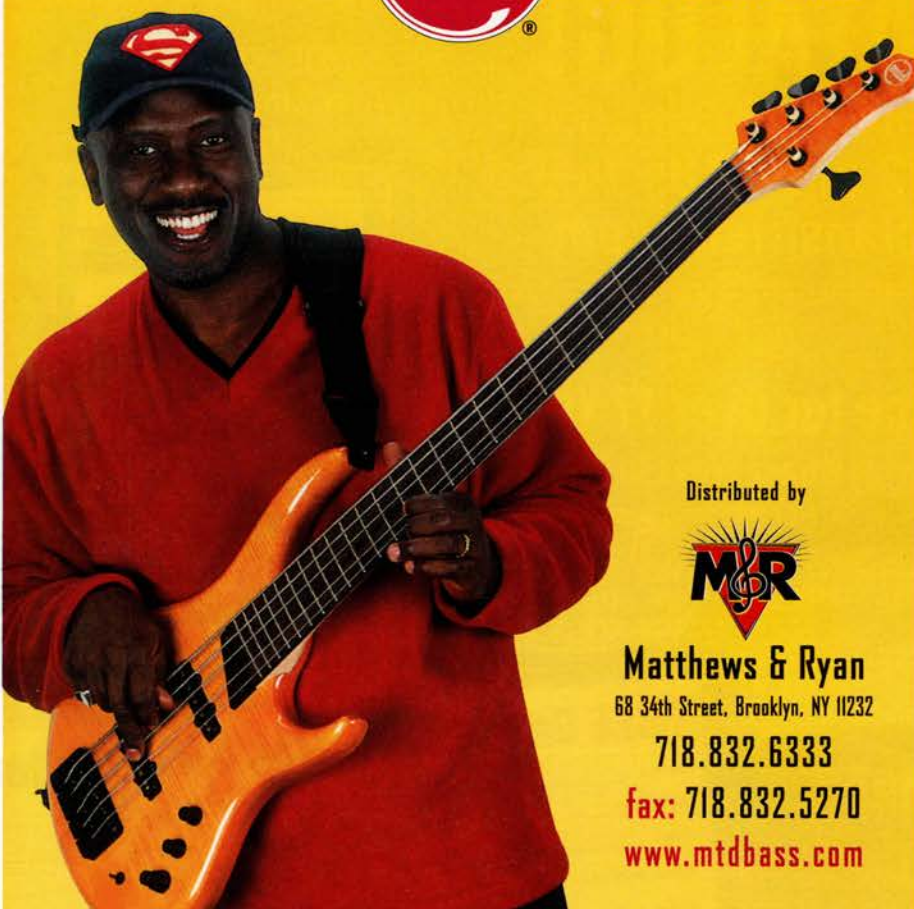
See music, page 62

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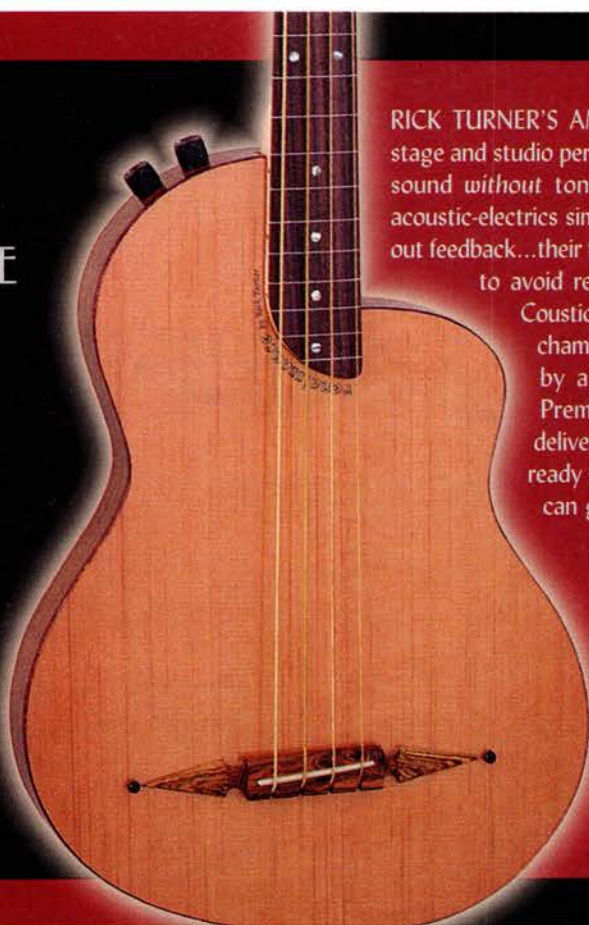


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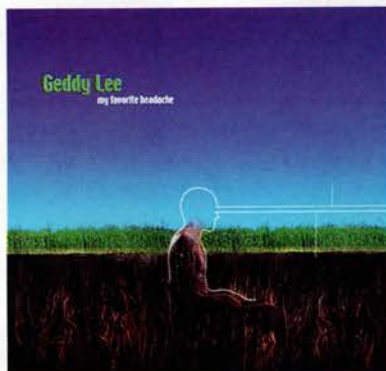
MUSIC LESSON

Throbbing Lines From My Favorite Headache

Geddy Lee's layered bass concept on *My Favorite Headache* has roots: "It's the same principal as what I've been doing for years onstage with Rush—simultaneously playing bass, keyboards, and stomping on bass pedals." Ex. 1a shows the opening solo riff of the title-track opener. Geddy reports, "To add attitude, I bend the G's and A's slightly sharp by pulling downward on the E string. On my right hand, to get a little rattle, I whack the string back and forth with my index fingertip and fingernail up near the neck." Ex. 1b shows the four-bar distorted, rhythm-guitar-like pattern that enters at 0:15. "I used the same back-and-forth index-finger technique, while anchoring my thumb on the E or A string."

Ex. 2 shows the guitar-doubled "Working @ Perfekt" main verse bass line. Geddy used his index and middle fingers to pluck the figure. "Ben Mink and I tried to come up with a cool combination of an arpeggio and a riff. Generally my index finger provides the high end—since I use the fingertip along with the back of the nail—while my middle finger adds a darker, fuller tone because I use only the fleshy tip."

A trademark Geddy sub-hook/counter melody can be found in Ex. 3,



from the chorus of "The Angel's Share" (at 0:30). "The Fender's tone is so strong. I love that I can play in the middle of the neck, as I did here, and not feel like the bottom has completely dropped out."

Ex. 4a shows the tricky guitar-doubled opening riff of "Home on the Strange." "It's almost like a warmup exercise—I'm playing the open string, 5th fret, and 7th fret across the A, D, and G strings." Anchoring his thumb between the pickups on the E string, Geddy plucks with his index finger while his left-hand hammer-ons do most of the work. Ex. 4b's funky verse line at 0:13 follows. Using a combination of left-handed deadening and right-palm

muting, Geddy adds grease with the hammer-ons and ghost-notes. Lee laughs, "I wouldn't call it real funk—it's more Canadian white-boy rock-funk!" In Ex. 4c, taken from the chorus at 0:44, he raises the intensity with straight 16ths and a double-stop, again using his favored back-and-forth index-finger motion.

Ex. 5 shows the four-bar verse arpeggio pattern from "Still," at 0:15. "I'm sort of fingerpicking with my right hand, using my thumb, index, and middle or ring fingers. My left hand is positioned almost like I'm playing three barre chords—but the pattern changes after each root note, which creates an interesting little melody of its own to counter what I'm singing."

Ex. 1a

♩ = 126

Rock

Ex. 1b

♩ = 126

Rock

Ex. 2

♩ = 101

Rock

♩ = 86

♩ = 86

Rock ballad

E

Bm7

E

Bm7

Musical score for "The Rose Tree" featuring a bass line and a guitar tablature line. The bass line is in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The guitar tablature line shows fret numbers and string numbers (T, A, B). The piece is marked 'S' for solo.

$\text{♩} = 110$

$\text{♩} = 110$

Rock funk

A

Rock funk

The musical notation shows two measures of music in bass clef, 4/4 time. The first measure contains four eighth-note pairs, each preceded by a pluck or pick symbol (indicated by a downward arrow). The second measure contains five eighth-note pairs, also preceded by pluck/pick symbols; the final pair is marked with a triplet bracket and the number '3'. Below the staff, fingerings are indicated by numbers 0, 5, and 7. A tablature section at the bottom left identifies the strings as T (top), A (middle), and B (bottom).

pluck p p p p

H H H H H H H H H H PO H

T
A
B

0 5 7 0 5 7 0 5 7 0 5 7 0 5 7 0 5 7 0 5 7 0 5 0 7

♩ = 110

♩ = 110

Rock funk

D

Dsus4

D

Dsus4

D

Dsus4

D

Dsus4

[illegible]

110

110

Rock funk

Cm

Rock funk

$\text{♩} = 100$

$\text{♩} = 100$

Pop rock

F#m7

D

E

let ring throughout

T
A
B

9 11 9 11 9 11 9

5 7 7 7 7 6 7

S

/7 7 9 7 9 9 7

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aluminum base plate with steel saddles. We noticed more open-string definition and a tighter feel when stringing through the body. Aluminum bridges provide punchy low-end clarity but suffer from upper-fret "pinginess"; Peavey's steel-and-aluminum formula alleviates this problem.

Electronics: 4

The Music Man-style low impedance bridge and J-style neck pickups are internally active, resulting in quiet operation and a wider

Peavey Millennium 5 Plus

By Scott Shiraki

Peavey became a serious bass-world contender with the introduction of the exotic neck-through Cirrus in '97 and the low-price graphite-neck G Bass in '98. The Millennium 5 Plus marks the company's entry into the high-end bolt-on arena.

Construction: 4.5

Our tester arrived sporting an AAAA flame-maple top over a three-piece alder body, separated

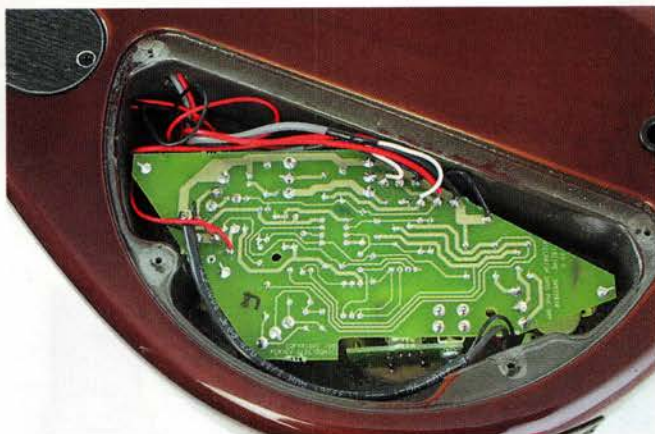
by a black veneer. The polyester/urethane tiger-eye finish enhanced the flame figure, giving it a 3-D effect. The laminate glue lines were tight, with no visible sanding scratches. The Millennium borrowed the compact double-cut-away Cirrus body shape with its long horns and soft edges. The fret job would have been perfect except for file marks left on some upper-register frets—a cosmetic flaw, not affecting sound or playability. Beautiful greenish-blue paua abalone dots are a nice touch. Five

neck bolts and a tight neck pocket ensure stability and prevent side-to-side shifting. Our tester's nut slots were cut to the correct depth but at an angle toward the bass side, leaving small gaps; however, this did not affect the open strings. Peavey chose quality Hipshot hardware instead of opting for cheaper imported parts, which often suffer from poor plating and workmanship. The custom Quadrajust bridge, which accommodates through-body stringing or quick-release top loading, combines an

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frequency spectrum. Blended and solo, each has a unique voice reflecting careful placement and design. Peavey mounts the pots to the circuitboard—standard procedure for many mass-produced instruments, but troublesome when it's time to change a pot. Apply too much heat and you can destroy the fragile tracer lines connecting the board's components. However, Peavey's sealed pots should last a

long time. The controls are laid out simply and are easy to understand. Even with the highs boosted, we heard only a little excess noise. (One staffer thought the treble control didn't do much.) The batteries and controls are in separate shielded cavities. Overall the Millennium Plus's electronics are well planned and executed.

Playability: 4

Straight out of the box the Millennium played great. Action, relief, and pickup heights were set at standard amounts. Staffers with different playing styles felt comfortable with our tester. The neck's back feels smooth and organic. The thinness from front to back appealed to most staffers, but it was a little too thin for a staffer used to chunkier necks. String spacing is a little tight at the nut and bridge, but the side-to-side saddle adjustment allows the treble strings to be spaced for more right-hand comfort.

Sound: 4

Peavey followed the formula for good tone: proven tone woods,

properly voiced electronics, and tight construction specs. Staffers noticed a large amount of vibration passing through the lower horn into their chest from the open *B* and *E* strings. The *B* sounds focused and punchy; even notes past the 12th fret didn't lose fundamental or clarity, which is unusual for 5-strings. The bridge pickup doesn't have the top-end crunch or wide bottom of a standard MM-style pickup, but it does have a unique warm and focused fingerstyle tone with the low mids boosted. Notes between the 5th and 9th frets sound especially sweet, with a special evenness and dynamic sensitivity. Dead spots were hard to find on our tester due to the neck's stiff graphite reinforcement. The maple top and maple neck/fingerboard combination add snap and definition, while the lightweight alder provides bottom and warmth. In a large rehearsal studio with drums and guitar, the tester's tone was fat and supportive, drawing positive comments: "Tight *B* string—not floppy sounding"; "sits well

with the other instruments."

Value: 4

The Millennium 5 Plus is a great value. The woods, hardware, finish, and assembly are all top notch. If you think of Peavey as manufacturing only utilitarian products, think again. The company continues to disprove this with each new bass it produces—the attention to fine detail in design and construction are commendable, especially at this price. Players in the market for a great-sounding, well-made 5—but not willing to drop boutique bucks—should consider the Millennium 5 Plus. **B**

Millennium 5 Plus

List Price: \$1,799

SCORE: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5

Construction: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Electronics: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Playability: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Sound: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Value: ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒

Bottom Line: Another amazing bass value from Peavey.

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Zoom 506II Bass Multi-Effect Pedal

By Bill Leigh

Zoom has upgraded its popular 506 Bass multi-effects pedal to the 506II. The goal? To make the unit easier to use, add more features and sounds, and lower the price by \$20.

Construction: 4

More compact than its elder sibling, the Zoom 506II fits neatly into a gig bag pocket. The unit's lightweight plastic frame and knobs don't inspire the bootstomping confidence provided by most steel-case stompboxes, or even the rugged molded plastic of Zoom's higher-end bass multi-effect, the BFX-708. But tradeoffs like this help keep the price accessibly low, and our test unit survived several rehearsals and gigs admirably. The battery option aids onstage use as well, especially since there's no stress-relief clip for the AC adapter's power cord. The back panel's CONTROL IN jack can accommodate an optional external footswitch (\$29) for changing banks, or an expression pedal (\$69) for volume control, wah effects, or real-time control of other effects parameters. The twin 7-segment LED screen has been moved to allow space for more intuitive editing controls, and sunken to prevent damage.

Electronics: 4

Switching among play mode,

bypass, and mute (by stepping on both footswitches) is pleasantly inaudible. Matching levels between patches can require tweaking, but Zoom made it relatively easy, shrewdly adding PATCH LEVEL as the first editable parameter after the play mode position. The chromatic tuner, which engages in bypass or mute mode, capably handles low B and beyond. It has an improved method of indicating the degree of sharpness of flatness, using cycling circles instead of the 506's tiny tuner lights. Inside, a single printed circuitboard serves as the 506II's brain. With the updated design, Zoom flipped the board over and used a smaller LED display to help make the unit more compact.



Plug in an optional AC adapter (\$25) or use four AA batteries.



Ease of use: 4

Using the 506II is a simple matter of plugging in and choosing one of the 36 patches with the footswitches. (The original 506 had 24 patches.)

A patch preload option lets you scroll through patches and confirm your selection before changing the sound.

A greatly improved knob layout makes editing patches on the 506II much easier than on the 506. Simply turn the PLAY/edit dial to choose an effect module and use the +/- buttons to change the parameter. To save your changes, hit STORE, select a location with the footswitches, and hit STORE again. There aren't separate user and factory patch banks, but there are simple procedures for restoring patches one at a time or globally.

Tweaking most effect parameters is fairly easy. Except in a few cases, there's no separate parameter control; usually an effect can be loaded at level 1 through 9 or with the optional expression pedal. (In patches with no pedal-controlled effects, the expression pedal controls volume.) Some modules offer so many options—all expressed in one or two

digits—you often need to refer to the helpful diagrams on top of the unit or to the sometimes vague manual. Still, most effects are easy to figure out, and the improved interface helps. The glaring exception is the 4-band EQ, which has nearly the same inexplicable setup as on the original 506, with an added CONTOUR parameter. The EQ module seems to offer plenty of options, but it's almost impossible to quickly figure out how to dial up what you want, even with manual in hand.

Sound: 5

Cycling through the presets, we quickly discovered that the 506II can make some deliciously novel, bandmate-impressing sounds. Especially cool is a new talkbox-style envelope effect, an area in which the original 506 was lacking. Gritty new distortion sounds



TECH SPECS

Made in: Japan
List price: \$145
Warranty: One year, parts and labor
Dimensions: 5 3/4" x 4 1/16" x 1 1/2"
Weight: 9 oz (without batteries)
Electronics: Solid state
Case: Plastic, aluminum base
Number of patches: 36 rewritable
Manufacturer's address:
c/o Samson
Box 9031
Syosset, NY 11791
(516) 364-2244
(516) 364-3888 fax
www.samsonetech.com

506II Bass Multi-Effect Pedal

List Price: \$145

SCORE 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5

Construction: 
Electronics: 
Ease of Use: 
Sound: 
Value: 


Bottom Line: Fat sounds for a thin price.

and a juicy step filter are similarly audacious. One staffer found it a bit hard to find good, standard bass tones among the presets, but a little offstage editing and simple patch relocating put a nice slap tone and a dubby reggae sound at his toe tips. Many of the unit's sounds are the same as the original 506's, including decent-quality choruses, overdrives, and autowahs. An added feature lets you set times for delay and reverb.

Because of the way the effects modules are set up for simultaneous use with numerous options in

each module, the 506II's sound-shaping capabilities seem limitless. One thing that makes the Zoom stand apart from other multi-effects is that it places autowah and pedal wah in the compressor module and phase shifting in the EQ module, instead of with other modulation sounds. This might seem counterintuitive, but it allows for some unique effect stacking, such as envelope-style autowah with chorus or octaving, or tremolo-like phasing with flange. This can get really wild with an expression pedal; for example, you can use the pedal as a wah while simultaneously having it control distortion amount or flanger speed.

Value: 4.5

While Zoom clearly made some construction choices to keep the 506II's price down, the company put a lot into making a better product with some impressive, unique sounds. For the price, the Zoom 506II is outstanding. 



The smaller 506II has a sleek design and a smaller LED display, which leaves room for a friendlier editing interface.



The 2-digit, 7-segment LED display can be difficult to interpret, but the labels around the PLAY/edit selector make it easier.

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Carvin RC210 Combo



By Terry Buddingh

The RC210 combines Carvin's full-featured R600 head with two 10" speakers and a Red Eye tweeter in a tilt-back cabinet. But you won't find the RC210 in your local music store—unless you live near one of Carvin's five Southern California retail outlets. Carvin, which has been making amplifiers for

over 50 years, specializes in selling factory direct.

Construction: 4.5

Carvin angles the RC210's ¾" poplar plywood cabinet 45° at the bottom to permit vertical or tilt-back positioning. Rubber feet support the amp in its different positions. The R600 head fits into

the upper cavity and is secured with four screws. You can easily extract the two-rackspace head from the cab to use separately; it has rackmounting ears.

A heavy steel grille protects the two 10" speakers and tweeter. Wood screws secure the heavy woofers. Since wood screws are more likely to strip the baffle and loosen, we prefer the added security T-nuts provide. A narrow slot at the baffle's bottom serves as a port. Duratuff II carpet covering protects the RC210's exterior, and metal corners provide extra protection. Carvin positions the deeply recessed handles for balance and easy lifting.

On the back panel, two slide switches provide tweeter attenuation, and a pair of ¼" jacks and two Speakons connect the cab. Carvin attaches a right-angle ¼" plug to the cab end of the speaker cable. Because there's no recess for the speaker cable, it could get crushed if you placed the amp on its back. Carvin recesses the head to protect its front-panel controls. A sturdy steel chassis houses a toroidal power transformer, and

the power-supply components reside on a circuitboard securely attached to the chassis bottom. The extensive preamp circuitry occupies a large double-sided glass-epoxy PC board that's secured to the front panel with two screws. Carvin mounts the pots to the front panel with metal nuts, increasing the board's rigidity and the controls' solid feel. The 12AX7 preamp tube's socket sits directly on the board; removing and installing tubes could cause unwanted board flex.

Electronics: 4.5

Carvin loaded the R600 head with enough features to satisfy the most dedicated knob twiddler. The amp employs three types of tone-shaping circuitry: three PRE SHAPE buttons, a 3-band EQ with semi-parametric mids, and a 9-band footswitchable graphic EQ. You can blend in the preamp tube for added warmth and fuller-sounding midrange. The compressor features threshold and ratio controls, and there's even an adjustable noise gate. You can also configure the two power-amp sections for full-range dual mono, bi-amped, or bridged mono modes, and select the bi-amping crossover frequency. The back panel offers



Instead of the usual rotary-pot L-pad, two slide switches adjust the compression horn's level. (The typical tweeter attenuator is known as an L-pad; the design allows the tweeter to present a constant load to the amp, usually 8Ω.)



The RC210's XLR line out features a direct line (pre/post EQ) button and ground lift. Carvin provides ¼" jacks for the graphic EQ on/off footswitch, and effects loop send and return. Separate loops are provided for bi-amped mode. Outputs include two ¼" speaker jacks for bridged mono operation and one jack for each bi-amped (or stereo) output.



three effects loops: full-range mono; split full-range, which lets you route different effects through different speakers; and split bi-amped, so you can route effects to the high or low bands. (Imagine a chorus on top with a sub-octave divider on the bottom.)

You can also adjust the two power amps' levels separately, allowing you to balance the signal between two cabinets in the split full-range or bi-amp modes. A master volume knob regulates

their overall level. Wait, there's more! The rear-panel XLR DI offers a DIRECT/LINE option as well as a ground lift button. There's even a front-panel 1/4" jack for headphones or a tuner.

Overall, the RC210 shows impressively solid construction, with good-quality pots and other components. We like the way Carvin secures each pot to the front panel with a nut, which adds strength and rigidity to the board. Our tester operated quietly.

Ease of use: 3.5

Because of its numerous preamp and power-amp options, the R600 head requires a little extra study time to fully dial in. We found it simplest to begin with the power amp in bridged mono mode, which gave us a workable range of plug-and-play sounds, at full power. We ignored the compressor and gate controls until we became familiar with all of the EQ functions, and we didn't add any external effects until we had a firm understanding of the front panel controls.

The RC210's well-placed handles let you carry it by yourself for short distances, but we used a dolly to ease transportation—the box's tilt-back shape precludes installing wheels. While not a small combo, the Carvin fit in the front seat of a small car, but it's probably too deep

for most trunks. On small and crowded stages the tilt-back position provided easier access to the controls. The anodized metal knobs shine nicely under bright lights, but the knobs' countersunk position-marker dots can be difficult to see under less-than-ideal lighting.

Sound: 4.5

The RC210 sounds surprisingly big for a 2x10. It handled our Lakland 5's lowest notes with ease, with a full-sounding fundamental, beefy low-mid emphasis, and deep-throated growl. Vertical placement enhances the bottom end, while the tilt-back position produces a more balanced, hi-fi-like sound. Tilting back the combo also helped bandmates hear it more clearly on a small, crowded stage. When we played fingerstyle the amp sounded full and fat, showing good dynamic sensitivity. The very flexible compressor smoothed and fattened slap-style playing. The noise gate seemed a bit sensitive; we found it difficult to adjust so it wouldn't cut off decaying notes prematurely. The gate was effective at taming noisy distortion pedals, however.

To test the bi-amp mode we added an Eden D-410XLT cab for the lows; the combination gave us huge reggae booty with added mid focus. As an experiment we stayed

in bi-amp mode, disconnected the Eden, and drove the RC210's speakers with the low band. By adjusting the crossover frequency we were able to attain some astonishingly fat tones for a combo, and the compressor helped us stretch extra headroom out of the power amp in that mode.

Compared to more costly 2x10 combo amps and head/stand-alone-cab combinations, the RC210 may not be as refined-sounding and its treble range isn't as extended, but it does a good job producing a wide range of thick, satisfying tones.

Value: 4.5

The versatile Carvin RC210 packs a ton of features into a compact and very affordable package. It's also solidly built, sounds good, and costs about the same as some 2x10 speaker-only cabs.

Carvin RC210 Combo Amp

List Price: \$769

SCORE 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5

Construction:

Electronics:

Ease of Use:

Sound:

Value:

Bottom Line: Versatile combo—delivered to your door.

TECH SPECS

Type: Solid-state/tube 2x10 tilt-back combo

Made in: U.S.A.

List price: \$769 (factory direct)

Warranty: One year limited

Power rating: Bridged mono mode: 600 watts RMS into 4Ω

Bi-amped mode: 250 watts RMS per channel into 4Ω

Speakers: Two 200-watt Eminence-made 10s, one 150-watt Fostex tweeter

Dimensions: 23 1/2" x 21 1/2" x 18"

Weight: 81 lbs

Options: R600 head only, \$569; RL118 1x18 cab (for bi-amped mode), \$359

Manufacturer's address:

12340 World Trade Dr.

San Diego, CA 92128

800-854-2235

www.carvin.com

Reverend Drivetrain Overdrive

By E.E. Bradman

Since 1996 the folks at Reverend have brought us retro-looking, forward-thinking instruments like the Rumblefish and Brad Houser signature basses. Now they've stepped into the effects arena with the Reverend Drivetrain Overdrive. Bob Weil of Visual Sound and Reverend's Joe Naylor designed the Drivetrain to emulate some of the characteristics of the classic Ibanez Tube Screamer TS-808 pedal, a favorite of blues and rock guitarists since the '70s.

Construction: 3.5

At just over one pound, the Drive-train is light and solid; the corners are rounded, the rubber feet are strong, and the knobs are built to take a beating. The unit's jacks, controls, and switches are chassis-mounted, decreasing the likelihood of damage from stomping. The bypass switch is soldered to the circuitboard, however, which could be a problem in the unlikely event the board collapses. The battery compartment, accessible by a single screw, strikes a good balance between plastic pop-up compartments and multi-screw setups.

Electronics: 4

Reverend's update of the Tube Screamer sound is a success thanks to all-analog circuitry, BASS and TREBLE controls, and the JRC 4558 IC chip, a central TS-808 component. The buffered bypass, designed by Weil, produces no click or no audible hum; the electronics don't color the signal in bypass mode. Naylor says he chose the buffered bypass because it lasts longer and costs less to replace than true bypasses.

Ease of use: 5

The Drivetrain's simple layout and bright green LED don't leave much room for confusion. When activated, VOLUME controls the output; DRIVE adds "dirt," and TREBLE and BASS effect those frequencies accordingly. Our tester's knobs were smooth and easygoing.

Sound: 4.5

Designed primarily as a guitar effect, the Drivetrain comes in

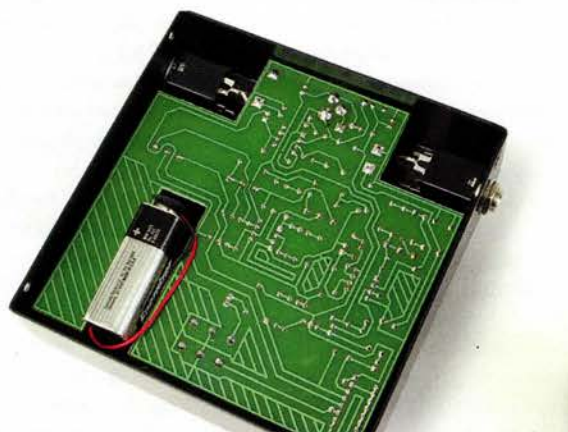
handy for bassists interested in natural-sounding overdrive or straight-up distortion. It can also be used as an active boost with a touch of crunch. The original 808's infamously poor bass response has been eliminated thanks to the Drivetrain's BASS and TREBLE knobs; the unit's overdrive isn't heavy on grit and preserves low end well. Adding treble brings out the most from the overdrive. To use the Drivetrain as an active boost, keep the TREBLE and DRIVE low. Experiment by inching up DRIVE; by 3 o'clock you should be in Larry Graham fuzz territory, and by 5 PM, adding a little treble may make you compete with your guitarist. Sample settings include "classic crunch"—DRIVE at 1 o'clock, TREBLE at 3 o'clock, and BASS and VOLUME at noon; for "full-on rock," max DRIVE, TREBLE, and BASS with 11 o'clock VOLUME. We'd love to see recommendations for bassists in the unit's manual.

Value: 4

At \$169 the Drivetrain is cheaper, more versatile, and more bass-friendly than an original Tube Screamer, which may cost upwards of \$250 on the vintage market. If you're looking for organic-sounding overdrive that preserves the low notes, you'll like the Drivetrain.

TECH SPECS

Made in: Taiwan
List price: \$169
Warranty: One year limited
Dimensions: 4 7/8" x 4 7/8" x 1 3/8"
Weight: 1 lb, 5 oz (with a 9-volt battery)
Electronics: All-analog circuitry
Case: 1/32" steel
Manufacturer's address:
27300 Gloede, Unit D
Warren, MI 48093
(810) 775-2991 fax
www.reverendmusical.com



You won't see this when you change the battery. (It has its own door.)

Drivetrain Overdrive Pedal

List Price: \$169

SCORE:

1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5

Construction: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Electronics: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Ease of Use: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Sound: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Value: ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒

Bottom Line: Want booty and crunch? Hop on the Drivetrain.

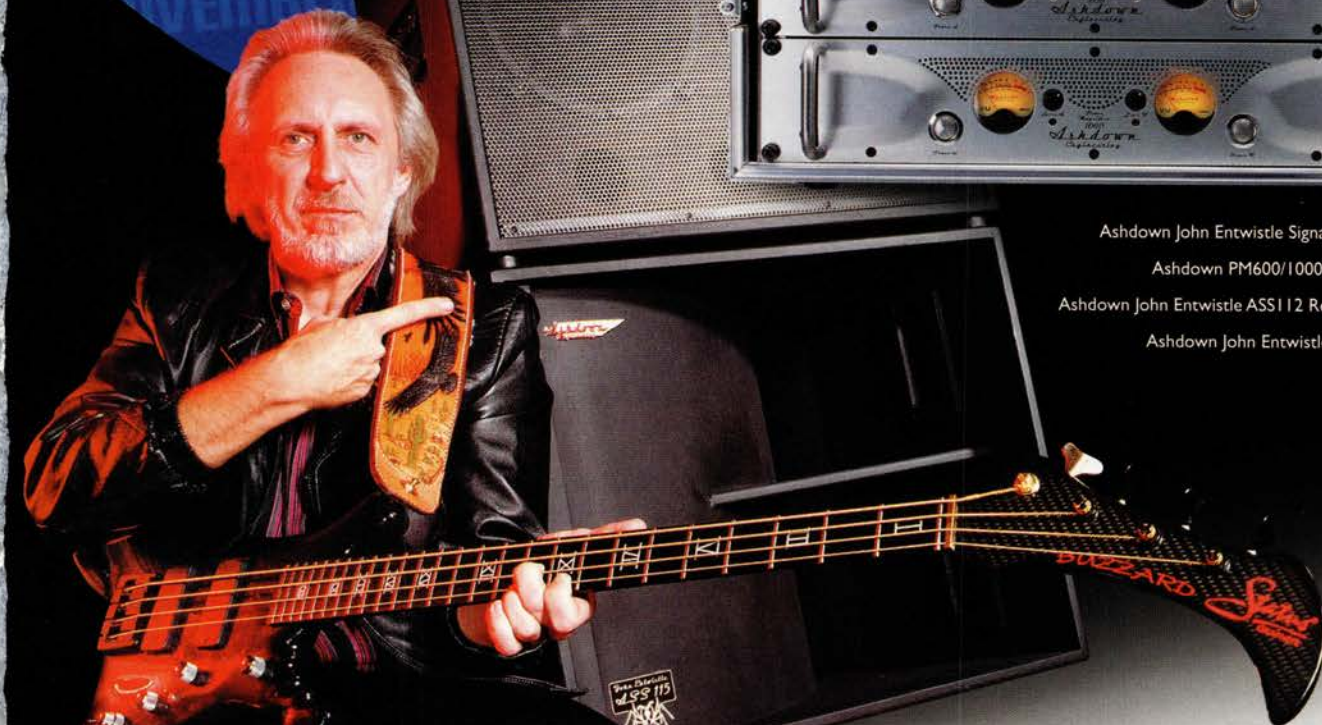
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Glockenklang Soul Head & Double Cabinet



TECH SPECS

Soul Head

Type: Solid-state head
Made in: Germany
List price: \$2,069
Power rating: 440 watts RMS into 4Ω
Warranty: Three years limited
Weight: 24 lbs

Double Cabinet

Type: 2x12 + tweeter
Made in: Germany
List price: \$1,855
Impedance: 4Ω (also available in 8Ω)
Power rating: 500 watts
Warranty: Three years limited
Weight: 64 lbs

Distributor's address:

Salwender International
1140 N. Lemon St. #M
Orange, CA 92667
800-464-3525
(714) 633-7881 fax
www.salwender.com

plus a DI level control. You can choose between series or parallel effects loops.

A peek under the hood reveals a beautiful red, double-sided PC board, neatly populated with quality components and over-size resistors for reliability. The board's underside is peppered with modern surface-mount components; ten MOSFET transistors are attached to a heatsink that's cooled by two fans. (Two low-speed fans can move air more quietly than one.) The Soul's layout is exceptionally clean and well executed.

The Double cabinet uses two custom-made 12" Volt drivers, plus a Fostex tweeter. Glockenklang uses only Speakon jacks; there are no 1/4" speaker jacks. The birch cabinet is finished with a durable epoxy coating, and studio-grade acoustic foam lines the inside.

The Soul head and Double cab are an excellent match. With the EQ bypassed the Glock rig sounds smooth, effortless, and relaxed, with exceptionally refined detail and a clear focus. Transient response is quick and well controlled without sounding clinical or dry. It really brought out the low-string growl of our Lakland 5-string, and it's one of the few amps we've tried with our Underwood-equipped German upright that didn't require an external preamp to sound really good. The upright sound is very natural, open, and musical—the Glock reveals the true character of every bass you play through it.

If you have an expensive high-end bass or a fine vintage axe and you're looking for an amp that enhances its subtleties, the Glockenklang Soul and Double should be on your must-audition list—if you have four grand to spend.

—Terry Buddingh

Germany's Glockenklang began building high-quality PA and hi-fi equipment in 1974; the small company entered the bass-amp business in '88. "Glockenklang" translates loosely to "bell sound," which represents their amps' clarity. Many high-end bass builders use Glocks as a reference standard because they reveal an instrument's nuances and character in microscopic detail. Luthiers often set the Glock's tone controls nearly flat or bypass them completely to hear a bass's pure sound. We reviewed Glock's more expensive Heart-Core head and Quattro 4x10 cabinet in August '98. The Soul head and Double cabinet are from the company's more affordable Bassware line. While still not cheap, consider them the "poor man's" Glocks.

The Soul's minimal controls include a 5-band EQ with frequency centers at 60Hz, 130Hz, 750Hz, 4.2kHz, and 12kHz. There's also an EQ on/off switch, which bypasses the tone-control circuitry for the cleanest possible signal path. Input A is for passive and low-output active instruments; input B (which has its own gain control) is for higher-output active basses. An A/B button lets you switch between instruments quickly. The Soul offers a full-featured XLR DI out, with pre/post-EQ and ground-lift switches,

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Soundroom

Spec Guide

By Scott Shiraki

Here's an overview of the techniques and tools we use when we evaluate basses. You can use these methods to maintain your bass or to scrutinize a new one. Most of the tools are affordable and can be purchased at your local hardware store and/or a guitar-building supply source.

When working on your bass, remember to tune it up between adjustments—strings over or under pitch will change the amount of relief due to different tensions. Take measurements while holding the bass in playing position. Adjustments to relief, action, and intonation can affect each other—double-check all measurements.



Checking for nut slot height. Fret the 3rd fret with your right hand and see if there is space between the top of the 1st fret and the bottom of each string. If it's hard to tell, fret the 1st fret with your left hand and listen for a tiny "clink" sound—if you hear it, there's space. You want to have .010" or a little less; measure it with a feeler gauge. An overhead light will help you see the space.

Intonating your bass. Plug into a tuner and play the 12th-fret harmonic, and then fret the note; if they register different pitches, the bass isn't intonated properly. If the fretted note is flat, move the saddle forward (toward the nut); if it's sharp, move it back (toward the butt end).



Measuring relief. Place the capo right behind the 1st fret and hold down the last fret of the string closest to you. Slip a feeler gauge between the string and the 8th fret. Increase the feeler-gauge size until the string moves slightly. Return to the previous gauge and double-check. To measure relief on the treble side, flip the bass over with the strings facing toward you and repeat the process. A good amount would be .015"—.020" on the bass side and a little less on the treble side, but not below .015".



Measuring action (string height). Hold a ruler upright behind the string at the 12th fret. Don't let the ruler rest against the string—this could affect the height. Measure from the top of the fret to the bottom of the string. Low action heights would be around $\frac{3}{32}$ " for the B or E strings gradually descending to $\frac{1}{16}$ " for the G.



Measuring pickup height. Hold down the outermost strings at the last fret and measure the distance between the bottom of the string and the top of the pickup. Begin with

1/8" and adjust to suit your playing style.

Checking for high or low frets. A precision-ground straightedge should not rock on the frets.



Basic Tools

- 6" ruler with 1/8", 1/16", 1/32", and 1/64" increments
- A large quick-release capo, such as a Kyser
- Feeler gauge with a range including .010"–.025" (available at auto parts stores)
- Allen wrenches in metric and standard measurements
- Small flathead and phillips-head screwdriver set
- Tuner

Specialized Tools

- Radius gauges (check fingerboard curvature)
 - Straightedges of various lengths
 - Multimeter (checks for ground continuity and pickup output)
 - Caliper (measures thickness)
- (These tools are available from Stewart-MacDonald, 800-848-2273, www.stewmac.com; and Luthier's Mercantile International, 800-447-4437, www.lmii.com.)

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JIM FERGUSON

Deep Summer Music [A Records]

Bassist: Ferguson

Instrument: 1930s Hawkes Panormo upright
Ferguson again displays his ability to sing jazz standards beautifully while accompanying himself on bass. He covers wistful ballads that well suit his breathy tenor voice, and he contributes originals that feature his clever Mose Allison-style lyrics. On his second CD as a leader, Jim plays with even more confidence, solos with greater authority, and sits in the rhythm section with obvious comfort. He also introduces a new trick, scatting in harmony with his bass solos. On a stunning vocalese version of Red Mitchell's "You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To" solo, Jim pays tribute to his late friend and mentor. (EF)

KEB' MO'

The Door [Epic/550 Music/Okeh]

Bassists: Reggie McBride, Freddie Washington
Instruments: McBride, '70 Fender Precision, fretless Schack 5-string, Tobias 5, Czech upright; Washington, Fender Precision
With simplicity and just the right feel, McBride and Washington deliver what each

track requires—even simple I-V's—for Keb' Mo', whose repertoire includes basic folksy feels, electric shuffles, and energetic soul. (BL)

STEVE LAWSON

And Nothing but the Bass:

Live @ The Troubadour

[Pillow Mountain; www.steve-lawson.co.uk]

Bassist: Lawson

Instruments: Modulus Q4-SPI 4-string, fretless
Modulus OB6 6-string, fretless Renaissance 5
Compiled from various live solo gigs, this CD boasts textures ranging from ethereal to raucous, as Steve layers multiple loops and solos with the help of a Lexicon JamMan. The strictly live format allows an occasional wart, but there are many gems. (EF)

MARK KNOPFLER

Sailing to Philadelphia [Warner Bros.]

Bassist: Glenn Worf

Instruments: Early-'70s Les Paul Signature Bass, '60 Fender Precision; '64 Fender Jazz, Sadowsky 5, Kay upright
Worf blends his electric axes masterfully into Knopfler's folk-rock musings, showing off his round mid-register sound on "The Last Laugh" (with guest Van Morrison), growly country-rock tone on "Do America," and

tastefully punchy pickstyle on "El Macho." The title tune (with James Taylor) hinges on Glenn's rocking-chair upright groove. (RJ)

SARAH PILLOW

Nuove Musiche [Buckyball, buckyballmusic.com]

Bassist: Percy Jones

Instrument: Fretless Ibanez 5

Percy is in peak form in a perfect setting for his idiosyncratic style, as classical/jazz diva Pillow enlists husband/vibist Marc Wagnon and his Brand X bandmates to recast Baroque-era songs in hip-hop, fuze-rock, and lounge jazz settings. Check Percy's parts on the haunting "Amarilli Mia Bella," "Orphée," and "The Fatal Hour." (CJ)

DROID

NYC D'NB [Shadow]

Bassist: Tim LeFebvre

Instruments: '65 J-Bass

LeFebvre's subterranean bass tone—mutated with a floorful of analog effects—provides subliminal dub under frenetic stickwork. The CD captures several gigs with trumpeter/knob twaker Jordan McLean leading live, improvised drum-n-bass in Manhattan. (BL)

ALAIN CARON

CALL ME AL! [Norac; www.alaincaron.com]

It's been a good season for bassist-led projects, with well-built CDs from a diverse list that includes Jimmy Haslip, Christian McBride, Rhonda Smith, and Geddy Lee. Add Alain Caron, whose first solo recording since '97's *Play* [Norac] exploits the wide spectrum of his talent: outrageous 6-string-bass chops plus deep groove sense, and tradition-minded writing and arranging skills paired with a smart perspective on computer-crafted styles.

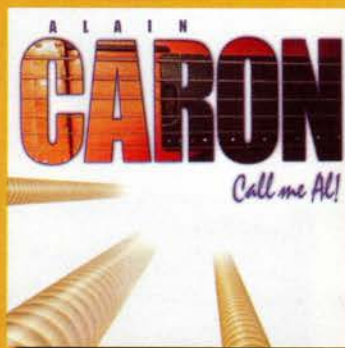
Fusionneering reputation aside, Caron makes deep, slinky grooves a recurring theme on *Al*. His riff on the opener, "Radio Format," hardly strays from his F Bass's bottom two strings as it builds intensity through subtle ghost-noted variations. In addition to creating a menacing mood, the line makes space for a horn sextet that crowds the bottom with tenor and bari saxes and trombone. Buoyed by Alain's solid arranging, the familiar horns + rhythm setting offers a surprisingly fresh-sounding respite for ears wearied by programmed pop jazz. Intelligent writing also lights "Finger Prints," as Caron creates a seductive sonority by blending his

fretless piccolo bass into the wind ensemble.

Amid the mellow moods, Alain scatters technoid treats such as "Baby Step," which brings skittering electronic percussion to "Giant Steps" changes, along with a lyrical fretless solo at a tempo pushing 300 BPM. "The 'F' File" features rhythmically precise yet grooving slap lines that steer the rhythm section while also functioning as an essential voice in the Tower Of Power-style horn melody. A finger-style 16th-triplet line bubbles beneath the horns on "4 & 6." Alain makes his perpetual-motion part work by staying in the pocket and in his own sonic space, adding punch with low-string ghost-notes and midrange staccato accents. "Impact" salutes Miles and Marcus through Tiger Okoshi's muted trumpet melody and Caron's effect-flavored slap background and highly chromatic slap solo.

Striding successfully between fusion grandstanding and smooth jazz pandering, producer Caron elicits spirited performances from his large cast (including longtime drum collaborator Paul Brochu), and a warm, live-in-the-studio sound envelopes the whole package. Plus you can use the bilingual liner notes to brush up on your French (or English).

—Richard Johnston

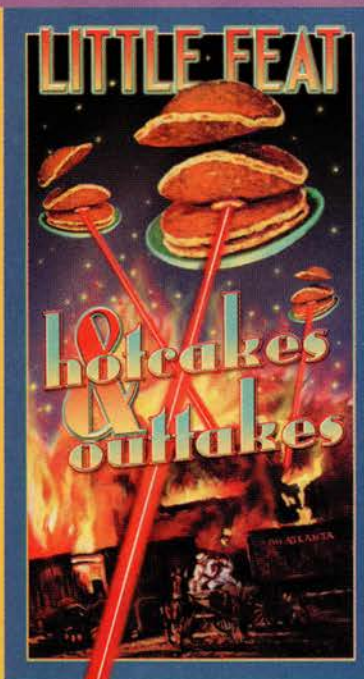


LITTLE FEAT

HOTCAKES & OUTTAKES [Warner Archives/Rhino]

Like the band itself, the music of Little Feat has remarkable staying power. Some of this four-CD compilation's most memorable tunes come from the group's early days under the leadership of genius/madman Lowell George, but there are gems from every phase of Feat's 30-year career. The first two CDs (1970-75 and 1976-81) feature the two lineups led by guitarist/vocalist George, who died in 1979; the third covers work since the band regrouped in '88. The fourth disc is an assemblage of demos and leftovers, most of them featuring George. As is often the case with such "rarities," they're a lot of fun to hear—once.

Roy Estrada, who had been a bandmate of George's in the Mothers Of Invention, was the group's original bassist. After the first two albums—which were greeted with critical acclaim and public indifference—he quit. His replacement was New Orleans-born Kenny Gradney, who remains a member to this day. Both bassists used Fender Precisions (Gradney switched to a Kubicki Factor in the early '90s), but it would be hard to find two more contrasting sounds and styles coming from 4-stringers in the same band. Estrada's fingerstyle tone on such classics



as "Strawberry Flats," "Easy to Slip," and "Tripe Face Boogie" is thick and bulbous; he lays down a seamless bottom that rarely draws attention to itself yet has many nuances. Gradney prefers a tighter sound that's tough, raw, and, above all, funky. At its best his bass has the throaty rumble of a big V8 engine, although it can be clanky (and out of tune) in spots. Over the years, Gradney has demonstrated great flexibility, too, stretching from the less-is-more grooves of "Dixie Chicken" and "Fat Man in the Bathtub" to the Steely Dan-ish jazz-pop of "The Ingenue."

This set was assembled with the help of keyboardist Bill Payne (a founding member) and guitarist Paul Barrère (who joined in 1972), and it's probably as good a selection as could be hoped for. Still, if you're not that familiar with the band, you might be better off with the first four albums (*Little Feat*, *Sailin' Shoes*, *Dixie Chicken*, *Feats Don't Fail Me Now*) and maybe one of the latter-day efforts—say, *Let It Roll* [all on Warner Bros.]. For Feat fanatics, though, *Hotcakes & Outtakes* will be hard to resist. The best tunes are all there, Bud Scoppa's lengthy liner notes are excellent, the "studio artifacts" disc has some laugh-out-loud moments—and you get to hear two underrated P-Bass masters strut their stuff in pristine, remastered clarity. —**Jim Roberts**

MIRACLE ORCHESTRA

Forks, Bends & Spoons

[Grapeshot; www.grapeshot.com]

Bassist: Garrett Sayers

Instrument: Fretless StingRay 4

Sayers's bubbly bridge-pickup tone and fluid facility will appeal to Jaco fans, as the loose and strangely funky jam-band quartet easily swings between genres and time signatures. (EB)

DUST FOR LIFE

[Wind-up]

Bassist: David Rhea

Instruments: Fender Jazz Deluxe 5, Warwick Corvette FNA 5

When he's unchained from guitar riffs, Rhea punctuates his bass lines with sinewy eighth-note fills and clever use of effects—from snarling fuzz to juicy, warbling filters—on *Dust For Life*'s skillfully played, smarter-than-average heavy pop. (BL)

INCOGNITO

The Best of Incognito [Polygram/Blue Thumb]

Bassists: Randy Hope-Taylor, Paul Williams,

Jean-Paul Maunick, Sara Lowenthal, Jay Daniels, Julian Crampton, Richard Bull

Instruments: Fat and funky electrics

They should have titled this one *How to Play Groovin' Bass*. Killer low-end work abounds, but Hope-Taylor's parts on "Everyday" and the Tower Of Power-inspired "Talkin' Loud" are required study for every aspiring funk and soul bassist. (SS)

CARLA BLEY

4X4 [Watt/ECM]

Bassist: Steve Swallow

Instrument: Parker Fly 5

Pianist Bley and husband Swallow use organ, drums, and a four-piece horn section to give an R&B/blues tinge to their iconoclastic jazz. With pick in hand, Steve leads sassy struts through "Blues in 12 Bars," "Sidewinders in Paradise," and "Baseball," before closing with the stirring ballad "Utviklingssang." (CJ)

TWILIGHT CIRCUS DUB SOUND SYSTEM

Dub Plates Volume Two

[M Records, www.twilightcircus.com]

Bassist: Ryan Moore

Instrument: No-name Gibson Thunderbird copy w/Hofner pickup

Impossibly deep, spaced-out, and trancey dub grooves from the Amsterdam-based one-man band. The vintage Black Ark Studio vibe lives on with real instruments and really chill instant-classic dub lines. How low can you go? (GO)

VIDEOS

LARRY GRAHAM

Graham Funk Bass Attack

Reunited with Family Stone drummer Greg Errico and Graham Central Station B3 monster Robert "Butch" Sam, a lively, grinning Graham rips through three songs—the burnin' "Give It to Me," the slow gospel ballad "Moorea," and the appropriately titled "Thumper." For each song he explains the rhythm section's functions, his relationship to Errico's bass drum, his use of effects, and each bass part, augmented by thumb and fretting-hand closeups.

Graham's method of directly addressing the camera is particularly inviting, and just as interesting are his unspoken lessons on showmanship. Dressed in white, wearing a sailor's cap, and singing into the mike mounted on his all-white Moon 4-string, Larry pours himself into each song—and he has some of the best "funk faces" ever. Errico and Sam are clearly happy to be joining the party, and Larry's heartfelt recollections with both players are enlightening. Equal parts entertainment, historical document, and instructional video, the 60-minute package is a treat for the eyes and ears. \$24.95 from Hal Leonard; (414) 774-3630; www.halleonard.com. (EB) ♪



REVIEWERS

BL = Bill Leigh

CJ = Chris Jisi

EB = E.E. Bradman

EF = Ed Friedland

GO = Greg Orwell

RJ = Richard Johnston

SS = Scott Shiraki

Woodshed



The Language Of Music By Glenn Letsch

Walking Bass, Part 3

Let's review our discussion of how to build walking bass lines: Walking bass calls for a quarter-note pulse, so if you have one chord per four-beat bar, in each bar you play four notes that imply that chord and lead you into the next chord. To start this process, you can ascend or descend from each chord's root for the first three beats, using only notes from the mode (or scale) appropriate to each chord. To "connect" to the next chord, on beat four, play a chord tone—root, 3, 5, or 7 of the present chord—that's right above or below the next chord's root. Another approach is to play through a chord using roots and 5ths (like F, F, C, C for an F major chord), or use arpeggios—such as C, E, G, E for a C major chord.

Now let's consider a few new walking-bass ideas. First, we'll try walking when there are two chords per bar, such as in "turnaround" measures—like bars 7 and 8 of an eight-bar chord progression, or bars 11 and 12 in a 12-bar progression.

With only two beats per chord, you can play



only two notes. One method is to make the first note the chord's root and the second a chord tone. Again, that second note should be right above or right below the next chord's root. Examples 1 and 2 show two walking lines, with diatonic approach tones, under a I-VI-II-V turnaround (C-Am7-Dm7-G7 in the key of C). Scrutinize each approach tone so you can appreciate why it works. Assume you are returning to the tonic (C) after each turnaround.

Now let's use another idea to add a bit more spice: We'll call it a "chromatic approach tone." Instead of using a diatonic approach tone, try a note a half-step above the next chord's root. Examples 3 and 4 use chromatic approach tones; again, assume the next note after each turnaround is the tonic (C). Ex. 3 uses approach notes one half-step above the destination chord; Ex. 4 uses approach notes one half-step below. Even though these notes are not diatonic (meaning they aren't part of the key signature), they clearly sound like they work. You can mix and match as long as your ideas sound good.

It's okay to introduce these chromatic approach tones now that we've learned some rules. Dizzy Gillespie once said, "You've got to learn the rules before you can break them." Wise words, indeed.

Glenn Letsch's latest Hal Leonard book is *A Beginner's Guide to Bass*. The computer games *Sim City* and *Sim City 3000 Unlimited* feature Glenn on bass.
www.glennletsch.com

Ex. 1 Cmaj Am7 Dm7 G7



Ex. 2 Cmaj Am7 Dm7 G7



Ex. 3 Cmaj Am7 Dm7 G7



Ex. 4 Cmaj Am7 Dm7 G7





The Right Foot By Ed Friedland

Road Maps, Part 2

Last time we started looking at chart-reading “road maps,” and we learned about repeat signs and first and second endings.

Here are some more road signs you’ll see: *DS*, *DC*, and coda signs all indicate “shortcuts” you need to make through a chart in order to follow the form. *D.C.* is short for *da capo*, Italian for “from the head.” It means go back to the chart’s beginning. *D.S.* stands for *dal segno*, “from the sign.” It tells you to jump back to a spot indicated by a special symbol; in this month’s chart (Ex. 1) you’ll find it at the beginning of bar 5 (under the rehearsal letter). The coda sign indicates a jump to a new section, most often the ending. In our chart there’s a coda sign at the end of bar 10. In more complex forms, the coda sometimes returns to the top of the chart, with the ending marked by a double coda sign.

Here’s the rundown on this month’s chart. Start at the intro and play through the first

ending, and then repeat from letter A through the second ending (skipping the first ending). Play through letter B. At the end of B’s eight bars, observe the *D.S. al coda*. It tells you to go back to the sign at A and then play through to the coda sign just before the first ending. At that point, skip down to the coda sign near the end of the chart. After the coda’s four bars, there’s a *D.C. al dbl coda*. This tells you to play from the beginning (*DC*) until you see the double coda sign; then skip down to the bottom of the form and play the one-bar double coda. Beneath that bar you’ll see the word *Fine*, “the end.”

This chart contains a few more new road signs. These are all shortcuts copyists use to save time and ink—the less ink on the page, the easier it is to read. In the intro, bars 3 and 4 are marked with a double slash below the number “2.” That’s a two-bar repeat, telling you bars 3 and 4 are exactly the same as the previous two bars. The last four bars of B are marked with a



four-bar rest, telling you to lay out for four bars. The coda’s second and third bars contain one-bar repeats, so those bars are played exactly like the first bar of the coda.

When you read a chart, stay focused on the road map—it helps to review the form mentally before you play. Remember you can miss a note here or there, but if you blow the form you’ll create a big mess. If you get lost, look to a sympathetic bandmate to cue you with rehearsal letters.

Ed Friedland seldom stops to ask directions, but he always folds his maps right. An upcoming book will compile many of his *BASS PLAYER* instructional stories; in the meantime you can find several at www.bassplayer.com/trenches.

Ex. 1

Intro

1

A

5

Coda

9

2.

13

B

17

4

D.S. al Coda

23

Dbl Coda

D.C. al dbl Coda

Fine

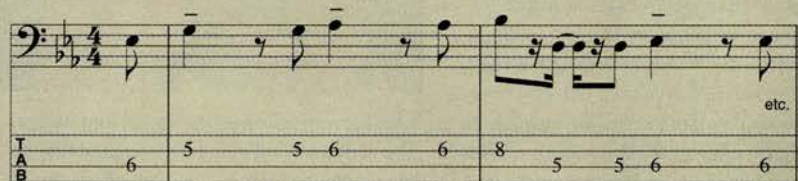


Christina Aguilera's

"Come On Over (All I Want Is You)"

Ex. 1

$\text{♩} = 117$ N.C.



Ex. 2

$\text{♩} = 117$ E \flat



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NOTATIONAL SYMBOLS?



Like her other hits from RCA's *Christina Aguilera*, "Come On Over (All I Want Is You)" finds the perky popster piping her tales of teen appetite over groove-heavy tracks by a legion of ace programmers. The "Come On" keyboard-bass verse line gets momentum by emphasizing leading-tone sounds (G and D) and laying into the tenuto quarter-notes (Ex. 1). The chorus stresses the roots and displaces the syncopated 16th-note lick, showing how clever variation can provide contrast and continuity between tonally similar sections (Ex. 2).

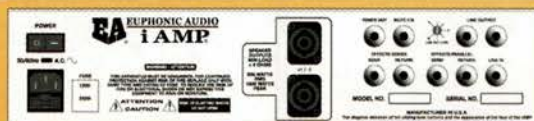
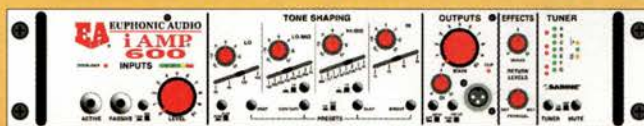
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Recording By Craig Anderton

Adventures In Lo-Fi



It's all the rage: lo-fi music, where you mess up sound not because you lack experience or can't afford good gear, but because you want to mess it up—and mess it up good. Let's consider what happens when bad things happen to good basses, and why it can be fun.

Making The Connection

Lo-fi has its limits: You'll probably still want the bass, along with the kick, to be the tune's driving low-frequency force. But a lot of lo-fi effects boxes, while delivering cool sounds, take away low end. I believe lo-fi works best when placed on top of the main bass sound, like chocolate syrup on a sundae. This requires a parallel effects connection so the effect combines with the bass rather than replaces it.

To use lo-fi effects in traditional mixer-oriented recording, the easiest approach is to split the bass signal and plug into two channels (Fig. 1). Use one channel to carry the straight signal; it provides the bottom. Place your effect into the other channel's INSERT jack, or between the split and the channel input. You can then use the mixer's faders to control the blend. Alternatively, you can use a channel's effects send to shunt away part of the signal to your lo-fi box, blending it back in either through another channel or through the mixer's effects returns.

With hard-disk recording and plug-in-based processing (see my January, August, and September '00 Woodsheds), you often end up adding effects on mixdown. To split the bass and preserve the low end, the simplest solution is to copy your main bass track to another track; you can then process the copied track with your plug-ins.

In either case, you'll probably want to pan

the two sounds to center (mono), unless you use a stereo bass track and stereo effects. One caution: Some lo-fi effects might affect phase enough to thin out the bass sound. To check for this, flip the board's PHASE switch on the channel with the effects, and listen carefully in mono. If the sound is fuller than with PHASE unflipped, leave it flipped. If it sounds thinner, go back to standard phase.

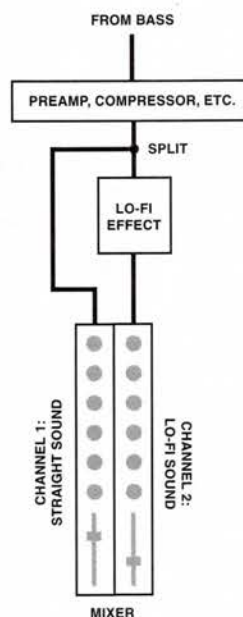
Lo-Fi Options

Here are some effects that can turn basses into instruments of mass destruction:

Distortion. You can get distortion by overloading an amp, but distortion boxes and plug-ins are often more flexible. Steinberg's Quadrafuzz, for example, is a 4-band distortion plug-in designed to work with bass as well as guitar. (The hardware version, sold by PAIA Electronics, is tuned for guitar only.) Distortion's biggest problem is it generates a ton of harmonics—it can tilt your tone too far into the treble end of the spectrum, thinning out your sound. I recommend following distortion with a high-cut filter so you can control the high-end/low-end balance.

Ring modulator. A ring modulator has two inputs. You plug your bass into one; the second input gets some other signal source—anything from a steady tone (the usual choice) to drums or program material. The ring modulator generates two tones: the sum of the input frequencies, and the difference. For example, if you're playing a 110Hz A and feed a 500Hz tone into the other input, the output will consist of two tones: one at 610Hz and another at 390Hz. Because these are mathematically but not harmonically related, the resulting tone is "clangorous" and has characteristics of a gong, bell, or similar non-harmonic percussive instrument.

Ring modulators are good for having crazy sounds going on behind your main line. They add a sort of goofy, non-pitched effect that subverts the tonal center of whatever you're playing.



Splitting the bass helps preserve the low end. This block diagram shows the setup for patching into a mixer.

Bit decimation. I don't know of any hardware box that does this, but bit reduction is a fairly common plug-in function. The concept is to reduce the number of bits used to encode a signal. For example, 16 bits gives about 64,000 steps of amplitude resolution—enough to encode a signal with excellent fidelity. Cut it down to four bits and you have only 16 resolution steps. This turns nice, round waveforms into weird stair-step shapes that generate lots of strange harmonics. It also adds a certain graininess to the sound, plus a kind of bizarre, ringing effect.

Pitch shifting. Technologically speaking, pitch shifting is hard to do; with budget effects the sound quality is usually not great. By setting the pitch shift to one octave lower and playing high on the neck, you can get a pulsating, ill-defined "growl" that definitely has its uses. The tone ends up sounding somewhat diffused and imprecise—but when you just need a big low-end "blorp," this could be the ticket.

Demented plug-ins. Software plug-ins have inspired a wide range of nastifiers. Some of these add vinyl scratchiness to sounds, some are designed to emulate overdriven analog tape, and some have no real hardware equivalents. (One of my current favorites is Native Instruments' Spektral Delay.) The more complex the plug-in, the more likely you can push the controls into creating crude, lewd, and rude effects.

Why?

So why would anyone want to make ugly sounds? Well, maybe you recently joined Slipknot, or maybe you just have a sense of musical humor. Or maybe you're tired of excessive attention to detail and want something more raw and rough. In any event, relax your standards from time to time—you may discover unusual sounds that end up being keepers. ♪

Musician/author Craig Anderton recently returned from gigging with Reissdorf Force and jamming with DJs at the Battery Park 2000 festival in Zurich, Switzerland. Go to www.musicplayer.com for a full report—and while you're there, check in to his forum and say "hi."



Jazz Concepts by John Goldsby

Bowin', Singin' Slam



Slam Stewart (1914–1987) sounds like he puts his bass through a flanger when he solos. He achieves the effect with his raw, bowed bass sound, intensified by his vocalizations—he sings along with the solo line, up one octave. His playing is all about melody, swing, and the blues.

This solo comes from the classic 1945 recordings Slam made with the great tenor saxophonist Don Byas. The tune is based on an often-pilfered Dvorák Humoresque. Slam bows through the chorus with a wild, joyous fervor few bassists ever achieve. Play through the solo, and then sing while you play it. To help you get the swing I've put in some bow markings (down-bow = drawing the bow toward you; up-bow = pushing the bow away). Don't have a bow? No problem—try playing the solo through your flanger. The best idea is to find the recording and listen to the master. Enjoy ... sing ... swing!

Note these Slam-isms:

Bars 1–2: Slam uses the C pentatonic often. His lines are harmonically simple, but the secret lies in the way he swings with the bow and sings an octave above.

Bar 2: Stewart slips and slides a lot, as when he glides into that *D*.

Bars 3–4: He plays triplets often. Use just a small amount of bow on these.

Bar 6: The "breath" mark (') gives you time to reposition your bow so you can down-bow the next note. It also lets you breathe when you sing.

Bars 9–12: Slam repeats a melodic phrase, changing one note for a blues sound.

Bars 17–18: Stewart starts the second 16-bar phrase with a lyrical quarter-note

triplet line.

Bars 25–27: Slam's line doesn't fit the chord changes Erroll Garner is playing on piano, but it sounds mighty funky.

Bars 33–37: Slam quotes the original melody. Recognize it?

Bars 41–42: This rhythmic pattern is a favorite device of Slam's: accenting groups of three notes in 4/4 time.

Bars 47–48: Slam finishes his romp with a typically bluesy lick. He starts walking again for the tenor solo on beat two in the bar following his solo. Where the hell does he put his bow so fast?

Find out where in the world you can hear and see John Goldsby on his Web site at www.goldsby.de, or send him e-mail at Goldsby@compuserve.com.

Ex. 1

♩ = 96

▣ = down-bow
▤ = up-bow

25 C6 E7 F6 Em7 A7

Dm7 G7 Em7 A7 Dm7 G7

29

33 C6 F6 F#dim7

37 C6 Am7 D7 D#7

41 C6 F6 F#dim7

45 C6 A7 Dm7 G7 C6

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Mastering 5-String by Roscoe Beck

Linear Movement, Part 2: Major Scales



Let's give arpeggios a rest and work with major scales, as well as a type of intervallic movement we touched on in my first Woodshed (September '99). I call it "stairstepping": When ascending, you basically move "two forward, one back"; descending, it's "down two, up one." We'll also employ a few other devices I've been discussing: linear movement, and the three-position approach (P1, P2, and P3). In other words, we'll play scales beginning at the tonic, lower 5th, and lower 3rd positions, moving in 4ths.

If you're already competent with scales, this

exercise may seem easier than previous ones—but you'll still find it challenging to start from different scale degrees and play across the instrument's entire range. You'll probably also learn a few new fingerings.

Ex. 1 (P1), in the key of C, works its way from the B string's low C to the G string's 9th-fret E. Ex. 2 (P2) is up a 4th in the key of F, in the exact same range; it starts on the (lower) 5th scale degree. Ex. 3 (P3) is up another 4th to B \flat ; it starts on the (lower) 3rd, the B string's 3rd-fret D, and ranges to the G string's 10th fret F. Ex. 4 (P1), in E \flat , starts the three-position

sequence over again. Continue playing the patterns until you reach your bass's top range; then reverse and descend in the same manner. You may find other, more comfortable fingerings—I encourage you to experiment.

As always, once you've memorized this exercise, work to remain conscious of the key centers—say them aloud each time you change.

Best known for his work with Eric Johnson and Robben Ford, Roscoe Beck has also produced a variety of artists and appeared in several instructional videos. www.roscoebeck.com

Ex. 1

1

5

9

13

Ex. 2

1

5



Alternatives by Michael Manring

Fretless Intonation, Part 1

I get a lot of questions about intonation. I'm pretty happy about that, because in playing any fretless instrument, intonation is *the* challenge—and it's always nice when people ask the right questions. As anyone who has even dabbled with a fretless or upright will attest, playing the dang things in tune ain't easy. Not only is it physically difficult, but we're all used to hearing fretted bass, so intonation standards are high. Playing a fretless instrument takes commitment, and it's probably best to accept that you just won't be able to play a lot of things on a fretless that you can play on a fretted. Still, there are so many nuance possibilities on the fretless, so much room for color and expression, that the struggle—and even the occasional sour note—is well worth it.

Like so many musical skills, intonation is really about listening. We all have an inborn level of pitch sensitivity, and some are gifted (or cursed, depending on how you look at it) with the almost supernatural ability we call "perfect pitch"—but virtually everyone can improve with practice. A good place to start is to train your ear to hear the acoustic phenomenon called "beating." This occurs when two tones of nearly identical pitch are played together; it's an audible modulation or pulsing at the rate of the difference between the notes' frequencies. If the notes are nearly in tune with each other (meaning the frequency difference is small), the beating will be slow; if the pitches are further apart the beating will be faster. Beating occurs because the two sound waves reinforce each other when their peaks align and cancel each other when they are out of phase. Beating is most clearly heard in two simple tones with the same timbre. This is why a common bass-tuning method is to compare one string's 5th-fret harmonic with the next-highest string's 7th-fret harmonic. It's also an excellent way to learn to hear beating.

A little beating is actually a pleasant sound—in fact, it's the basis for chorus and flange effects—but when beating gets faster the notes start to become dissonant. Try the 5th/7th-fret-harmonic tuning method and listen for when the beating starts to become displeasing. It's more important, though, to concentrate on getting the two notes exactly in tune with no beating at all. (Turn off all effects when you practice

intonation so you're hearing as pure a tone as possible.) Once you're comfortable with this exercise, try playing the G at the D string's 5th "fret" (from here on let's use the term "place") simultaneously with the open G. The beating probably won't be as clear with these full tones as it is with harmonics, so take your time and listen to how the two tones interact.

Once you're comfortable hearing beating between unisons, move on to other intervals. Intonation has to do with the relationships between notes, so it's always best to practice intonation with some kind of reference. Your intonation might sound fine when you're playing single-note lines by yourself, but when you go to a gig and suddenly have to play with other musicians, it can be a very different story. It's not quite as easy to hear beating in intervals

*We all have an inborn
level of pitch sensitivity,
but virtually everyone can
improve with practice.*

other than unisons, but if you take your time and listen carefully, you'll hear a pitch location where each interval sounds most in tune. Your pitch reference for practicing can be any number of things, but it should be something that's reliably in tune—if you spend all your time practicing to an out-of-tune piano, you'll get really good at playing out of tune!

If you have a friend willing to sit and play scales along with you on a fixed-pitch instrument (like piano or guitar) you're in luck—but I'll suggest a few other options. One of the simplest pitch references is using your open strings. Just as we used the open G as a reference for the D string's G, you can use it as a reference for practically any other note on your E, A, and D strings. Try allowing your G string to ring while you play all the other G's on your bass—the 3rd and 15th places on the E string, the 10th and 22nd places on the A string, and so on. Then



play all sorts of G scales on your E, A, and D strings against the open G—major, minor, pentatonic, etc. Do this very slowly, and for each note, listen for the pitch location that sounds best against the open string. It can be hard to hear 2nds, 7ths, and their compounds, but the other intervals should have a place that really feels like "home." Try the same thing using each of your other open strings as the reference; then try tuning your strings to other notes to give you additional key references—for example, tune your G string to A \flat , or your D string to C \sharp . Open strings are always available as references, but the drawback is you can only practice your intonation on the remaining strings.

Eventually you can do these exercises with a metronome if you like, but it's good to spend some time concentrating just on pitch without worrying about time at all—that's hard enough! ♪

Michael Manring recently finished recording the Yo Miles Band's second Sony CD (due out early this year) and has begun work on another Attention Deficit CD for Magna Carta, which will be out in the spring. His latest solo recording, *The Book of Flame*, is on Alchemy.
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They laughed when I said they could have **Perfect Pitch**... until I showed them the simple secret!

by David Lucas Burge



It all started as a sort of teenage rivalry...

I'd slave at the piano for five hours daily. Linda practiced far less. Yet somehow she always shined as the star performer at our school. It was frustrating. What does she have that I don't? I'd wonder.

Linda's best friend, Sheryl, bragged on and on to me, adding more fuel to my fire. "You could never be as good as Linda," she would taunt. "Linda's got **Perfect Pitch**."

"What's **Perfect Pitch**?" I asked.

Sheryl gloated about Linda's uncanny abilities: how she could name *exact tones and chords*—all **BY EAR**; how she could sing any tone—from *mere memory*; how she could play songs—after just *hearing* them!

My heart sank. Her *fantastic EAR* is the key to her success. How could I ever hope to compete with her?

But it bothered me. Did she *really* have **Perfect Pitch**? I finally asked Linda point-blank if it was true.

"Yes," she nodded to me aloofly.

But **Perfect Pitch** was too good to believe. I rudely pressed, "Can I test you sometime?"

"OK," she replied.

Now she'd eat her words...

My plan was ingeniously simple: When Linda least suspected, I challenged her to name tones—*by ear*.

I made her stand so she could not see the piano keyboard. I made sure other classmates could not help her. I set up everything perfectly so I could expose her **Perfect Pitch** claims as a ridiculous joke.

With silent apprehension, I selected a tone to play.

(She'll *never* guess F#, I thought.)

I had barely touched the key.

"F#," she said. I was astonished.

I played another tone.

"C," she announced, not stopping to think.

Frantically, I played more tones, skipping here and there all over the keyboard. But somehow she knew the pitch each time. She was **AMAZING!**

"Sing an E♭," I demanded, determined to mess her up. She sang a tone. I checked her on the keyboard—but she was right on!

Now I started to boil.

I called out more tones, trying hard to make them increasingly difficult. Still she sang each note perfectly on pitch.

I was totally boggled. "How in the world do you do it?" I blurted.

"I don't know," she sighed. And that was all I could get out of her!

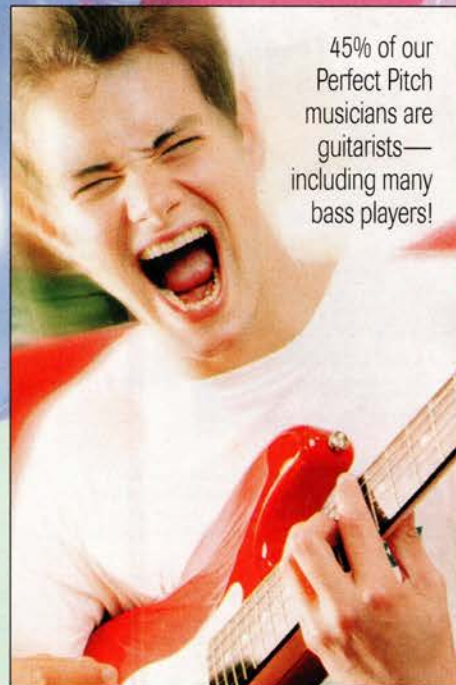
The dazzle of **Perfect Pitch** hit me like a ton of bricks. My head was dizzy with disbelief. Yet from then on, I knew that **Perfect Pitch** was real.

I couldn't get it...

"How does she **DO** it?" I kept asking myself. On the other hand, why can't *everyone* recognize tones by ear? It dawned on me: people call themselves *musicians* and yet they can't tell a C from a C#?? Or A major from F major?! That's as strange as a portrait painter who can't name the colors of paint on his palette! It all seemed odd and contradictory.

Humiliated and puzzled, I went home to work on this problem. At age 14, this was a hard nut to crack.

I tried it out for myself. After some sweet-talking, I would get my three brothers and two sisters to play tones for me—to name by ear. But it turned into a



45% of our **Perfect Pitch** musicians are guitarists—including many bass players!

guessing game I couldn't win.

Day after day I tried to learn **Perfect Pitch**. I would play a tone *over and over* to make it stick in my head, but later I couldn't remember any of them. And I couldn't recognize any of the tones by ear. Somehow they all sounded the same after awhile; how were you supposed to know which was which—just by *listening*?

I would have done anything to have an ear like Linda, but it was way beyond my reach.

So, finally, I gave up.

Then it happened...

It was like a miracle... a twist of fate... like finding the lost Holy Grail. Once I stopped *straining* my ear, I started to listen **NATURALLY**. Then the incredible secret to **Perfect Pitch** jumped right into my lap.

I began to notice faint "colors" within the tones. Not *visual* colors, but colors of *pitch*, colors of *sound*. They had always been there. But this was the first time I had ever "let go"—and *listened*—to discover these subtle differences.

Soon—to my own disbelief—I *too* could *recognize the tones by ear!* It was simple. I could hear how F# sounds one way, while B♭ has a *different sound*—sort of like "hearing" red and blue.

The realization struck me: **THIS IS PERFECT PITCH!** This is how Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart could mentally envision their masterpieces—and know tones, chords, and keys—all by ear!

It was almost childish—I felt sure that *anyone* could unlock their own **Perfect Pitch** by learning this simple secret of "color hearing."

Bursting with excitement, I went to tell my best friend, Ann (a flutist).

She *laughed* at me. "You have to be *born* with **Perfect Pitch**," she asserted. "You can't *develop* it."

"You don't understand **Perfect Pitch**," I countered. I showed her how to listen. Timidly, she confessed that she *too* could hear the pitch colors. With this jump start, Ann soon realized that she had also



"How in the world do you do it?" I blurted. I was totally boggled. (age 14, 9th grade)

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gained Perfect Pitch for herself.

We became instant celebrities. Classmates loved to call out tones for us to magically sing from thin air. They played chords for us to name by ear. They quizzed us on what key a song was in. Everyone was endlessly fascinated with our "supernatural" powers, yet to Ann and me, it was just normal.

Back then, I didn't know I would later cause such a stir among college music teachers. But as I entered college and started to explain my discovery to the academic world, many professors laughed at me.

"You must be born with Perfect Pitch," they'd say, "You can't develop it."

I would listen politely. Then I'd reveal the simple secret—so they could hear it for themselves. You'd be surprised how fast they changed their tune!

In college, my so-called "perfect ear" allowed me to skip over two required music courses. Perfect Pitch made everything easier for me—my ability to perform, compose, arrange, transpose, improvise, sight-read (because you know the tones you're playing without looking)—and my enjoyment of music skyrocketed. I learned that music is very definitely a HEARING art.

Oh, you must be wondering what happened with Linda? Please excuse me, I'll have to backtrack...

It was now my senior year of high school. I was nearly 18. In these three-and-a-half years with Perfect Pitch, my piano teacher insisted I had made ten years of progress. And I had. But my youthful ambition still wasn't satisfied. I needed one more thing: to beat Linda. Now was my final chance.

The University of Delaware hosts a music festival each spring, complete with judges and awards. To my horror, they scheduled me that year as the grand finale of the entire event.

The day arrived. Linda gave her usual sterling performance. She would be tough to match, let alone surpass. But my turn finally came, and I went for it.

Slinking to the stage, I sat down and played my heart out. The applause was overwhelming.

Later, posted on the bulletin board, I scored an A+ in the most advanced performance category. Linda got an A.

Sweet victory was music to my ears—mine at last!

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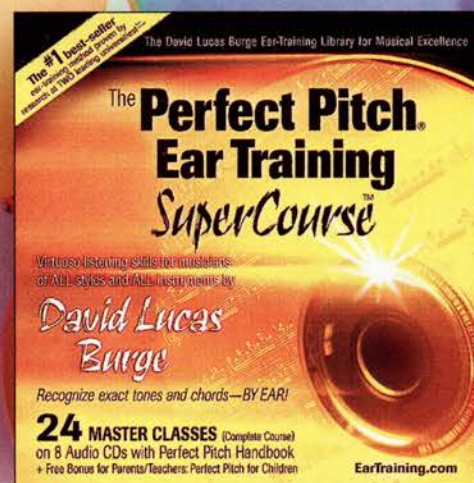
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Perspective

By Jim Roberts

Brass Nuts & Banjo Necks



For the past year I've been asking luthiers how they got started building basses. There are more interviews to come, but I thought I'd pause to consider some of the things I've learned from these master builders. The column is called Perspective, after all.

While most of the luthiers were players with a knack for repair work and/or woodworking, their backgrounds also include studying engineering (Michael Pedulla) and animal behavior (Roger Sadowsky), building FM radio stations in the Midwest (Ron Wickersham), and selling auto parts (Joe Zon). Both Dan Lakin and Mike Lull were vintage fanatics who used the proceeds from selling old instruments to help them build new ones. And Ned Steinberger was a furniture designer who got into instrument making simply because he shared work space with Stuart Spector.

For these budding builders, many of whom got their starts in the '70s, one of the hardest aspects of bass building was finding components. Cutting bodies and necks from chunks of wood was one thing—making pickups, bridges, and tuning machines was another. The parts industry as we now know it simply didn't exist, so electronics and hardware had to be scavenged from production basses—or made from scratch.

Victor with banjo bass. Does he know something we don't?

Alembic was the pioneer in this area (and in many others), and its founders crafted almost everything themselves, from multi-laminate bodies to brass nuts. Other nascent builders lacked the knowledge and machinery to do that, so they improvised. Ken Smith made his first "soapbar" pickup by cramming two Fender Jazz pickups into the same rout. Stuart Spector just slapped together a crude pickup, using a sewing-machine motor to wind the wire. Rich Lasner and his friend Stu Sigmond machined "three-pound" bridges out of marine brass. Eventually, quality bass parts began to appear on the market, including Schaller and Grover tuners and the Leo Quan Badass Bridge, which was a big improvement over the stock Fender models. Without these parts (most of which were intended as upgrades for the ubiquitous Fender basses) it's doubtful the custom bass industry would have gotten off the ground.

The most important parts were the pickups offered by such companies as Schaller, DiMarzio, and EMG. Again, many of these were initially designed as Fender replacements, but original models began to appear in the late 1970s. Several builders told me Bill and Pat Bartolini were much more than suppliers: They served as design partners, creating new pickups that maximized the potential of new instruments like the Pedulla Buzz Bass. In the story of the small to medium-size companies that offer so many great basses today, the Bartolinis deserve credit as unsung heroes.

Another was Billy Thomas, a guitar-playing woodworker who helped both Stuart Spector and Ned Steinberger learn to use power tools without severing body parts. (That's Billy with Ned in the October '00 Perspectives photo.) And let's not forget San Francisco's Ron Armstrong, who pioneered the onboard circuitry that transformed the sound of the "next generation" bass guitars. When Roger Sadowsky decided to try an active circuit, he installed one from Armstrong's Stars Guitars—and it was a huge success. (Armstrong also made hardware; Michael Tobias's first bass had a Stars Guitars bridge.) Even a synthesizer manufacturer gets a

tip of the hat: Joe Zon's stint at Polyfusion Electronics made him realize he needed active circuits to build basses with greater tonal flexibility.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the stories I've told so far is the central role played by the Brooklyn Woodworkers Co-operative, which was housed in a Civil War-era building that had previously held the Ansonia Clockworks. If you could travel back in time and stroll into the co-op in the late '70s, you would find Stuart Spector working on his own basses as well as ones designed by Ken Smith, who might be sitting there supervising Vinnie Fodera's carving. Look up and you'd see Ned Steinberger, who had already designed the influential NS bass for his co-op neighbor Spector. Ned would be working out the details of his headless bass and figuring out how to build entire instruments from a graphite/epoxy resin composite. Stick around and you'd meet many of the top New York bassists as they dropped by to check out the instruments under construction—including, perhaps, Anthony Jackson, who was eagerly pursuing his dream of the ultimate contrabass guitar. (He still is—just ask Fodera.) That venerable Brooklyn building still stands. Someone ought to hang one of those historic marker plaques there, to acknowledge its role as a laboratory in the development of the modern electric bass.

And then there's the "banjo neck factor." As you may recall, Stuart Spector was inspired to become a luthier when he learned his friend Kix Stewart had made a banjo neck. ("If he can do that," thought Stuart, "I can make a guitar or a bass.") Michael Pedulla built a banjo neck while he was still a student. And Michael Tobias's first bass had "a little neck, like a broomstick," which sounds suspiciously like a banjo neck to me. I'm not sure what it means ... but there it is. Maybe Victor Wooten knows. ✂



Jim Roberts, who was *BASS PLAYER's* Editor sometime in the last century, is thinking about writing a book called *How Banjo Necks Changed the World*. You can e-mail him at: JHRob49@aol.com.

Infinity



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In terms of sound, technology and craftsmanship the new Infinity represents a milestone for Warwick. With the Infinity bass Warwick sets a new standard in instrument making by skillfully combining the technical use of CNC machines and traditional



DESIGN

The body shaping has been designed over many years and its appearance is certainly set to become a new classic. It allows the player absolute ease of handling, whether standing or sitting. The large cutaway makes it easy to go up to the 2nd octave and offers plenty of room to play with!



SOUND

Created from the perfect harmony of Ovangkol and hand-picked Birdseye or AAA Flamed Maple Wood, the new Infinity is a beautiful instrument that provides the player with warm lows, growling mids and plenty of high end. The pickup configuration, with the splitable, active MEC Twin-J and active MEC J-style pickups, offer a wide range of sound possibilities and textures. Combining these pickups with Seymour Duncan's BassLines electronics and careful fine tuning of all the electronic components, the Infinity is literally a chameleon of modern sound.

The Infinity - the first classic of the new millennium.



Warwick®

Call or write for a free catalog:

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Imagine a world without color...
Imagine a song without bass...



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